PRELUDE TO POETRY

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FOREWORD

This book is a collection of poems for young pupils, based [illegible]

our introduction to each section upon the literary history of the period, and our brief notes on the lives of the more important poets, should be thoroughly digested and learned by the pupils using this book: for the book is not a literary history. It is hoped, however, that these introductions and notes indicate, in a simple manner, the trend of literary thought sufficiently to give young readers some interest beyond the mere printed matter, and also that they so emphasize the leading names and ideas in English writing as to fix these in the minds of pupils and so provide some incentive at a later date for them to seek authors and their works for themselves.

A casual glance at the contents may make a Master or Mistress feel that some of the poems (especially in the early part) are rather difficult for those of the age for which we are catering. We find that this difficulty disappears with usage; and in using these poems ourselves we are content at first reading rather to skim the early part of the book, doing just sufficient of it to leave with pupils an impression of the poets and the manner of their work. Then, later, when familiarity with the moderns who write more in their own idiom has made pupils more accustomed to verse while yet retaining some memory of the earlier poems, it will be found that they will revert to these, as a sort of revisi[illegible] enjoyment.

It is hoped that the book will meet any of the following needs:

In Preparatory Schools it should provide not only a poetry reader, but also a general elementary course of English literature suitable for the year ending in the Common Entrance Examination. In Public and other Secondary Schools it can be used as one year's work of this type in a lower form, or it can be made a general introduction to English literature by way of a poetry reading book and, as such, can be spread over two year's work. Finally, and in particular, we hope that the book will be used as a preliminary to *English Lyrical Types* by B. J. Pendlebury (Blackie). Taken in conjunction with this work and as a forerunner to it, this book should provide the essential literary history, the knowledge of poetic style, and the range of shorter English poems, which are required by the general literature papers in the School Certificate Examination and in the Leaving Certificate Examination of the Scottish Education Department.

The examples have been chosen with two objects in view. First, we have borne in mind that there is some verse which "all young people are expected to know". We have endeavoured to retain such of this as was worth while, at the same time excluding much of the rubbish with which it has in the past been cumbered. For example, our old friend "Horatius" will be found in these pages, but we have made no place for that eternal bore "Casabianca". Second, we have endeavoured to give an example of each of the really prominent poets, even when the poet, like Pope, does not readily provide suitable excerpts for young readers. And we have carried our examples to the point of giving, we hope, a representative selection of the moderns.

Finally, we trust that the placing of the Notes on the same page as the text will make the book more serviceable and the notes of more real use than is generally the case with English texts and readers.

E. H. J.

A. S. V. T.

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Section I

THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH

The English Language. — It was roughly about the year 400 that the Romans finally left England to defend Rome against the savage peoples who were attacking it from Central Europe. The British, thus abandoned, were quite unable to protect themselves against the raids of fierce tribes who came over the sea from the shores of Denmark, Germany, and what we now call Holland. From about the year 450 the invaders from overseas began to settle and either to turn the British into slaves or to drive them into the most distant and barren parts of the island, such as Wales and Cornwall. The conquerors, who were the forefathers of the present British people, were brave and vigorous, but were heathens and were very little better than savages. They spoke, according to their different tribes, dialects of a language afterwards called "Anglo-Saxon"; but it is very doubtful whether even a few of them could read or write; or, indeed, whether the language they spoke had any written letters at all.

About the year 600 Christian missionaries began to come from abroad, and the Anglo-Saxon people, or the English as we must now call them, were converted to Christianity. These missionaries were educated people who could read and write, and the language they used for this purpose was Latin. But they were not so foolish as to try to force the Latin language on to the rather dull-minded English; so they took the native speech and turned it into writing for the common people and taught the more clever of them to read and to

write in it. With this, English written work, or literature as it is called, first begins. But you would not recognize the language if you saw it—except, perhaps, for an occasional word which would be something like a word we use to-day; and nowadays this language—which is called "Anglo-Saxon"—can be read only by scholars. The common people, however, all spoke it, and when, later, the Danes, who spoke another tongue something like it, conquered part of England and settled there, no doubt convenient Danish words also crept into the speech of the ordinary people.

In 1066 came William the Conqueror with his Normans. They occupied the country, and William divided the land among his followers. These people spoke yet another tongue—Norman French—and the clever among them could possibly read and write a little in that language, and could certainly read and write in Latin. The language of the common people, however, remained Anglo-Saxon. But as the years went on, very large numbers of Norman French words crept into their speech; also, because all teaching was in the hands of the monks, who used Latin, some Latin words came into common use. The Norman French lords, too, began in time to speak the Anglo-Saxon tongue of their servants, mixing it freely with their own Norman French expressions. So, gradually, from 1100 onwards, by a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Norman French and a little Latin, there grew up a common English language, and by 1300 it was in general use all over England. It was not, as yet, written; for the few educated people who wished to write still used Latin or, occasionally, French. But education was beginning to spread. More and more people could read and write and did not see why they should do so in a different language from the English which they commonly spoke. So, by 1350, even the nobles and educated people were beginning, quite commonly, to write in English. You would not quite recognize it as the English

we use to-day, but once you have got used to its differences of spelling, and to some words that are no longer used, you will be able to see that it is the foundation of our present tongue. Gradually the use of Latin and French for writing dropped out, and gradually the spelling and words of English altered until they became what we now read and write.

The Beginnings of Poetry.—We cannot say when the English, or Anglo-Saxons, first began to use poetry. We know that from the earliest times there was a class of men called bards who sang or chanted, sometimes to the music of a harp, a rude sort of verse in which they told the stories of the deeds of real or imaginary heroes. Some bards were servants who lived in the households of chiefs or nobles, others were wandering story-tellers. They did not write down their verse, but taught it by heart to their children or friends, who improved on it, and passed it on to others.

Then came the conversion of England to Christianity, and the first books were written. There was not at first much thought of writing down poetry: the early writings were mostly religious books, or histories of what was going on at the time—which are called "chronicles". In places, however, these chronicles, and even the religious books, break into verse—that is to say, into lines of poetry of a regular length and swing: later some of them are written entirely in verse, and about the year 670 we find, for the first time, men who lived in the monasteries and who wrote mainly poetry. Such an one was Cædmon, often called "The first English Poet", though, of course, the language in which he wrote was the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

From now onwards Anglo-Saxon poetry becomes fairly common. The poems are largely religious; but sometimes they consist of the bards' stories of heroes, copied down and improved, and often the chronicles were written in verse.

After the Norman Conquest Anglo-Saxon writing begins

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to disappear. In its place Latin was used for the religious books and chronicles. So, too, poetry, which still was mostly on religious subjects or legendary stories, was written in Latin, or in French.

But, as England became a separate country with a language of her own, people wanted more and more to write in that language. The Crusades and foreign wars had taken Englishmen abroad; travelling became more general; the country became more wealthy, and, instead of the bare stone castles of the Normans towering over the rude huts of the English peasants, there came much finer buildings decorated with carving and hangings, and soundly built homesteads. English life began to develop: men began to take up different trades and occupations, and began to take interest in their neighbours and to find in other people and the way they lived, and in the little funninesses of their characters, something more to write about than the religious matters and histories to which they had until then confined themselves.

So, from about 1350 onwards, poets began to write pictures of the English people, and of how they lived—and of the English countryside, and what it was like—and of people abroad, and their customs, and to tell stories of things they had heard abroad. There were now a number of poets writing of these things, and doing so in English. The greatest of these was a Londoner in the train of Prince John of Gaunt, son of Edward III. This Londoner, whose name was Geoffrey Chaucer, was, perhaps, our first great poet, and, with his stories and pictures of the people among whom he lived, English poetry may be said to begin. He wrote, of course, in quaint Old English which you will not be able to follow till you are fairly used to reading poetry; but the specimens of his work that are given here will show you how he wrote; and by the time you have finished this book you should be able to enjoy them.

Geoffrey Chaucer

(1340–1400)

"The Father of English Literature" was born in London, and as a page in the Royal household of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, saw service in the French wars, and was later employed on public business in Italy. Still later he held a number of official posts in London. As a poet he both loved his fellow men and saw through their weaknesses. He had a great vein of fun and also delighted to give his readers little facts about the habits and dress of his characters. Above all he was a teller of tales, and his most famous poem, *The Canterbury Tales*, is really a collection of stories told by a party of pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. The piece that follows is from the Prologue to this poem, which describes the various pilgrims.

THE KNIGHT AND THE SQUIRE

A knyght ther was and that a worthy man,
That fro the tymė that he first bigan
To riden [illegible]

And ever honóurėd for his worthynesse.

1. i.e. when summoned to war by his feudal over-lord.
2. Farther.

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors was goode, but he ne was nat gay;
[illegible]
[illegible]
For he was late y-come from his viage,[20]
And wenté for to doon his pilgrymage.
With hym ther was his sone, a yong Squiér,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkès crulle [21] as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,[22]
[illegible]
[illegible]
In Flaundrès, in Artoys and Pycardie,[25]
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,[26]
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshé flourès whyte and reede;
Syngynge he was, or floytynge,[27] al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with slevès longe and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and fairé ryde;
He koudé songès make and wel endite,
Juste [28] and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write.
Curteis he was, lowely and servysàble,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

17. Coarse cloth.
18. A garment rather like a pull-over.
19. i.e. stained with the rust from his chain-mail.
20. Travels. 21. Curled.
22. Average height. 23. S[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
26. i.e. despite his small experience.
27. Playing the flute. 28. Joust.

Section II

FROM CHAUCER TO MILTON

For a hundred years after the death of Chaucer, English poetry becomes rather uninteresting. Those poets whose names are still remembered wrote either because they wished to draw attention to evil deeds which were becoming common in their time, or because they wished to improve the living conditions of the people. The cost and strain of the French wars, the terrible troubles that followed the Black Death, the selfish quarrels of the greater nobles (which led at times to Civil Wars), all combined to make the country too distressed to give the poets much scope, and the only true poetry written is to be found in anonymous ballads.

During these dark years in England, a very important change was taking place in the life and interests of people abroad. The continent of Europe was swept by a great movement, which is called the Renaissance. The word is French and means a " New Birth ". This " New Birth " was not a movement confined to literature: it affected men in every way. It started in Italy when men rediscovered the works of the old Latin and Greek writers, which had been lying in monasteries, preserved yet forgotten by the learned monks. In these books the Italians found beautiful stories and noble thoughts, which led them to wider fields of study and new paths of learning; and soon other nations caught their enthusiasm. It seemed as if the discoveries of the poets were producing a spirit of discovery in all men. Sailors began to

explore strange lands and scientists found new laws. The Germans, too, invented the art of printing, and soon the books of the famous authors of old were read everywhere. They were indeed exciting days, and perhaps you can see why the word Renaissance was coined to describe them, for in a sense the world was "born again".

Later this great movement came to England. Picture to yourself the effect which it had upon Englishmen. The land was just recovering from the Wars of the Roses, and under King Henry VIII she was beginning to feel herself a united nation. When she had put her own affairs in order, she became powerful and prosperous: her people had time to enjoy life, to read, and to travel abroad. Two famous courtiers, Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey, journeyed to Italy and learned what the Italian poets were doing. They copied them, and brought back to England their new styles of verse. With the publication of the poems of these two men, English literature continues in an unbroken line of greatness until our own day.

There now seem to be many good poets, too numerous to mention, until we come to the name of Edmund Spenser, the author of the *Faerie Queene*, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Elizabethans were also very fond of the drama; but most of their plays, unlike most of ours to-day, were written in verse. Therefore, their poetry can be divided into verse to be read in a book, and verse to be spoken in plays. These plays had developed rapidly from very simple beginnings. Originally, the drama was a pageant illustrating stories from the Bible and was performed inside the churches. Later, it became so enlarged that it took place in the open air, and the cost and work of producing the plays was taken over by the great Trade Guilds, who vied with one another in making the spectacles more interesting and attractive. In this way, various small parts were introduced which often

had little to do with the original story; but it is from these additions that real drama sprung. By Queen Elizabeth's time good plays were common. The greatest of the early Elizabethan dramatists was Christopher Marlowe and he, like Spenser, reveals what Englishmen had learned under the influence of the Renaissance. His verse is bold and exciting, and his characters are adventurous and courageous.

So far, you have seen how the ballads were almost the only true poems which existed after the death of Chaucer; how the Renaissance changed the lives of Englishmen; how Spenser celebrated the glory and greatness of England; and how Marlowe expressed in drama the new spirit of adventure and curiosity. When we think of all these great achievements it seems almost impossible that they could all be done even better by one man; but it is so, and the man was William Shakespeare.

After his death, the drama declined in power, although men like Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher (and later, Webster and Ford) wrote some fine plays. Very good poetry, however, continued to be written. Spenser was followed by Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) and Michael Drayton (1563–1631). Later, during the reign of Charles I, came Sir John Suckling (1609–42), Colonel Lovelace (1618–58), and Robert Herrick (1591–1674). Other famous names were those of Andrew Marvell (1621–78), George Herbert (1593–1633), Henry Vaughan (1621–95), Abraham Cowley (1618–67), and Edmund Waller (1605–87); but the greatest of them all was John Milton (1608–74). With his work Elizabethan literature draws to a magnificent close. Between Milton and the poets of the eighteenth century is a great gap, not only of achievement, but also of outlook and interests.

The glories of Queen Elizabeth's age did not have long to flourish after her death. For it was not many years ere the struggle between the High Church and Court party, on the one side, and the Parliamentary and Puritan party, on the

other side, began to grow acute—a struggle which ended, as you know, first in a Civil War, next in the execution of the King, then in ten years rule of the country by Cromwell, and finally in the Restoration of Charles II to the Throne. Such serious internal strife turned men's minds away from the high spirit of adventure of Elizabethan days. Each side, of course, had its poets and its writers. The Cavalier poets on the Court side did their best work, perhaps, in polished love songs and stirring choruses; but with the downfall of their party this kind of verse largely disappeared. The Puritans naturally inclined much more to serious and reflective poetry. Milton, who, in one sense, is the last of the Elizabethans, is incomparably the greatest of the Puritan writers; and after him there comes a group of very sober and thoughtful poets—some of whom are called the metaphysicians—whose work, though very good, is often difficult to follow, and is not very entertaining though most devout. Apart from poetry of this sort, and apart, too, from histories and pamphlets, there was not much written in Cromwell's days, for the Puritans considered the stage ungodly and virtually brought a stop to the great playwriting tradition of Elizabethan time.

Just as the Puritan triumph had prevented the Elizabethan playwrights and the Cavalier poets from continuing, so, too, the Restoration of Charles II, with his flippant court, killed, so to speak, the development of the serious Puritan work, and his reign contains no great poets except those who, like Milton, though they lived on into his days, really belonged to a previous time. The Restoration period, as Charles's reign is called, is chiefly notable for the revival of plays, written, for the most part, not in the grand verse of Elizabeth's days, but in very witty prose. We have to wait until the very end of that period, when William III was about to drive James II from the throne, before, in the person of Dryden, another great serious poet appears.

John Lydgate

(1370–c. 1450)

LONDON LICKPENNY

To London once my steps I bent,
  Where truth in nowise should be faint;
To Westminster-ward I forthwith went,
  To a Man of Law to make complaint,
  I said " For Mary's love, that holy saint,
  Pity the poor that would proceed!"
  But for lack of Money I could not speed.

And as I thrust the press among,
  By froward chance my hood was gone,
Yet for all that I stayed not long
  Till to the King's Bench [1] I was come.
  Before the Judge I kneel'd anon,
  And pray'd him for God's sake to take heed.
  But for lack of Money I might not speed.

Beneath them sat clerks a great rout,[2]
  Which fast did write by one assent,
There stood up one and cried about
  " Richard, Robert, and John of Kent!"
  I wist not well what this man meant,
  He cried so thickly there indeed.
  But he that lacked Money might not speed.

1. One of the various courts of law at which a case might be heard in the rather confused legal system of those days.
2. Large gathering.

Unto the Common Pleas [3] I yode [4] tho,
  Where sat one with a silken hood;
I did him reverence, for I ought to do so,
  And told my case as well as I coud,
  How my goods were defrauded me by falsehood.
  I got not a mum of his mouth for my meed,[5]
  And for lack of Money I might not speed.

Unto the Rolls [6] I gat me from thence,
  Before the clerks of the Chancerie,
Where many I found earning of pence,
  But none at all once regarded me.
  I gave them my plaint upon my knee;
  They liked it well when they had it read,
  But lacking Money I could not be sped.

In Westminster Hall [7] I found out one
  Which went in a long gown of ray,[8]
I crouched and kneeled before him anon.
  For Mary's love, of help I him pray.
  "I wot not what thou mean'st," gan he say;
  To get me thence he did me bede,
  For lack of Money I could not speed.

Within this Hall, neither rich nor yet poor
  Would do for me aught although I should die.
Which seeing, I got me out of the door
  Where Flemings [9] began on me for to cry,
  "Master, what will you copen [10] or buy?
  Fine felt hats, or spectacles to read?
  Lay down your silver, and here you may speed."

3. Another court of law. 4. Went.
5. Not a word for my trouble. 6. Another court of law
7. Near the Abbey. Courts were also held here.
8. Striped cloth.
9. The people of Flanders did much trading in London.
10. Fancy.

Then to Westminster Gate I presently went,
When the sun was at highé prime;
Cookés to me they took good intent,
And proffered me bread with ale and wine,
Ribs of beef, both fat and full fine;
A fairé cloth they gan for to sprede,
But wanting Money I might not speed.

Then unto London [11] I did me hie,
Of all the land it beareth the prise.
"Hot peascodés!" one began to cry,
"Strawberry ripe!" and "Cherries in the rise!" [12]
One bade me come near and buy some spice,
Pepper and saffron they gan me bede,
But for lack of Money I might not speed.

Then to the Cheap [13] I began me drawn,
Wheré much people I saw for to stand;
One offered me velvet, silk, and lawn,
Another he taketh me by the hand,
"Here is Paris thread, the fin'st in the land!"
I never was used to such things indeed,
And wanting Money I might not speed.

Then went I forth by London Stone,
Throughout all the Can'wick Street.
Drapers much cloth me offered anon;
Then comes me one cried, "Hot sheep's feet!"
One cried "Mackerel!" "Rushes green!" another gan
greet;
One bade me buy a hood to cover my head,
But for want of Money I might not be sped.

11. Westminster was not then part of London.
12. Newly picked cherries.
13. The street of Cheapside, a shopping centre: other parts of old London are named in following stanzas.

Then I hied me into East Cheap;
  One cries "Ribs of beef," and many a pie;
Pewter pottés they clatter'd on a heap,
  There was harpé, pipe, and minstrelsie.
  "Yea, by cock!" "Nay, by cock!" some began cry;
  Some sung of Jenkin and Julian for their meed,
  But for lack of Money I might not speed.

Then into Cornhill anon I yode,
  Where was much stolen gear among;
I saw where hung mine owné hood
  That I had lost among the throng:
  To buy my own hood I thought it wrong;
  I knew it well as I did my Creed,
  But for lack of Money I could not speed.

The taverner took me by the sleeve,
  "Sir," saith he, "will you our wine assay?"
I answered, "That cannot much me grieve,
  A penny can do no more than it may."
  I drank a pint, and for it I did pay.
  Yet soon ahungered from thence I yede,
  And wanting Money I could not speed.

Then hied I me to Billingsgate,
  And one cried, "Hoo! Go we hence!"
I prayed a barge man, for God'ses sake,
  That he would spare me my expence.
  "Thou scrap'st not here," quoth he, "under 1
    pence;
  I list not yet bestow any alms deed."[14]
  Thus lacking Money I could not speed.

Then I conveyed me into Kent;
For of the law would I meddle no more,
Because no man to me took intent,
I dight me[15] to do as I did before.
Now Jesus, that in Bethlehem was bore,
Save London, and send true lawyers their meed!
For whoso wants Money with them shall not speed.

15. Proceeded.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE

Anonymous—From Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Border*

[In mediæval times plundering raids were frequent along the English and Scots border. In 1388 at Otterbourne, Harry Hotspur, of the family of Percy, Earls of Northumberland, was defeated in trying to repel a raid by Douglas—who himself was killed in the battle.

Many old ballads by unknown authors have often several versions—as is the case with this and the ballad which follows. The versions chosen are more clear in meaning and more modern in spelling than some of the others.]

It fell about the Lammas tide,[1]
When the muir-men win their hay,
The doughty earl of Douglas rode
Into England, to catch a prey.

He chose the Gordons and the Graemes,
With them the Lindesays, light and gay;
But the Jardines wald not with him ride,
And they rue it to this day.

And he has burn'd the dales of Tyne,
And part of Bambrough shire;
And three good towers on Roxburgh fells,
He left them all on fire.

1. August.

And he march'd up to Newcastle,
And rode it round about;
"O wha's the lord of this castle,
Or wha's the lady o't?"

But up spake proud Lord Percy then,
And O but he spake hie!
"I am the lord of this castle,
My wife's the lady gay."

"If thou'rt the lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me!
For, ere I cross the border fells,
The tane [2] of us shall die."

He took a long spear in his hand,
Shod with the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas there
He rode right furiouslie,

But O how pale his lady look'd
Frae aff the castle wa',
When down, before the Scottish spear,
She saw proud Percy fa'.

"Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I wad hae had you, flesh and fell; [3]
But your sword sall gae wi' me."

"But gae ye up to Otterbourne,
And wait there dayis three;
And, if I come not ere three dayis end,
A fause knight ca' ye me."

The one of us.
Skin.

"The Otterbourne's a bonnie burn;
'Tis pleasant there to be;
But there is nought at Otterbourne
To feed my men and me.

"The deer rins wild on hill and dale,
The birds fly wild from tree to tree;
But there is neither bread nor kale [4]
To fend my men and me.

"Yet I will stay at Otterbourne,
Where you shall welcome be;
And, if ye come not at three dayis end,
A fause lord I'll ca' thee."

"Thither will I come," proud Percy said,
"By the might of Our Ladye!"
"There will I bide thee," said the Douglas,
"My trowth I plight to thee."

They lighted high on Otterbourne,
Upon the bent [5] sae brown;
They lighted high on Otterbourne,
And threw their pallions [6] down.

And he that had a bonnie boy
Sent out his horse to grass;
And he that had not a bonnie boy,
His ain servant he was.

But up then spake a little page,
Before the peep of dawn—
"O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord,
For Percy's hard at hand."

4. Literally, any vegetable food.
5. The bare coarse grass of the hill-top.
6. Cloaks.

"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liar loud!
Sae loud I hear ye lie:
For Percy had not men yestreen,
To dight [7] my men and me.

"But I hae dream'd a dreary dream,
Beyond the Isle of Sky;
I saw a dead man win a fight,
And I think that man was I."

He belted on his good braid sword,
And to the field he ran;
But he forgot the helmet good,
That should have kept his brain.

When Percy wi' the Douglas met,
I wat he was fu' fain![8]
They swakked their swords, till sair they swat,
And the blood ran down like rain.

But Percy with his good broad sword,
That could so sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.

Then he call'd on his little foot-page,
And said—"Run speedilie,
And fetch my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery."

"My nephew good," the Douglas said,
"What recks the death of ane?
Last night I dream'd a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain.

7. Deal with. 8. Fain = very ready, i.e. to fight.

"My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the braken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

"O bury me by the braken bush,
Beneath the blooming briar,
Let never living mortal ken
That ere a kindly Scot lies here."

He lifted up that noble lord,
Wi' the saut tear in his e'e;
He hid him in the braken bush,
That his merrie men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders flew,
But many a gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

The Gordons good, in English blood
They steep'd their hose and shoon;
The Lindesays flew like fire about,
Till all the fray was done.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
That either of other were fain,
They swappéd swords, and they twa swat,
And aye the blude ran down between.

"Yield thee, O yield thee, Percy!" he said,
"Or else I vow I'll lay thee low!"
"Whom to shall I yield," said Earl Percy,
"Now that I see it must be so?"

"Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the braken bush
That grows upon yon lilye lee!"

"I will not yield to a braken bush,
Nor yet will I yield to a briar;
But I would yield to Earl Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh the Montgomery, if he were here."

As soon as he knew it was Montgomery,
He struck his sword's point in the gronde;
And the Montgomery was a courteous knight,
And quickly took him by the honde.

This deed was done at Otterbourne,
About the breaking of the day;
Earl Douglas was buried at the braken bush,
And the Percy led captive away.

THE CRUEL BROTHER

There was three ladies play'd at the ba',
With a heigh-ho! and a lily gay; [1]
There came a knight and play'd o'er them a',
As the primrose spreads so sweetly. [1]

The eldest was baith tall and fair,
But the youngest was beyond compare.

The midmost had a gracefu' mien,
But the youngest look'd like beauty's queen.

1. These lines were a sort of chorus, repeated in the same lace in each verse.

The knight bow'd low to a' the three,
But to the youngest he bent his knee.

The lady turn'd her head aside,
The knight he wooed her to be his bride.

The lady blush'd a rosy red,
And said "Sir Knight, I'm o'er young to wed."

"O ladie fair, give me your hand,
And I'll make you ladie of a' my land."

"Sir Knight, ere you my favour win,
Ye maun get consent frae a' my kin."

He has got consent frae her parents dear,
And likewise frae her sisters fair.

He has got consent frae her kin each one,
But forgot to speer [2] at her brother John.

Now, when the wedding-day was come,
The knight would take his bonny bride home.

Her father dear led down the stair,
And her sisters twain they kissed her there.

Her mother dear led her through the close,
And her brother John set her on her horse.

She lean'd her o'er the saddle-bow,
To give him a kiss ere she did go.

He has ta'en a knife baith lang and sharp,
And stabb'd the bonny bride to the heart.

2. Ask.

She hadna ridden half thro' the town,
Until her heart's blood stained her gown.

"Ride saftly on," said the best young man,
"For I think our bonny bride looks pale and wan."

"O lead me gently up yon hill,
And I'll there sit down and make my will."

"O what will you leave to your father dear?"
"The silver-shod steed that brought me here."

"What will you leave to your mother dear?"
"My velvet pall [3] and silken gear."

"And what will ye leave to your sister Ann?"
"My silken scarf and my golden fan."

"What will you leave to your sister Grace?"
"My bloody cloaths to wash and dress."

"What will ye leave to your brother John?"
"The gallows-tree to hang him on."

"What will ye leave to your brother John's wife?"
"The wilderness to end her life."

This fair lady in her grave was laid,
And a mass was o'er her said.

But it would have made your heart right sair—
With a heigh-ho! and a lily gay—
To see the bridegroom rive [4] his hair,
As the primrose spreads so sweetly.

3. Cloak. 4. Tear.

Edmund Spenser

(1552?–99)

Edmund Spenser was born in London. He was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School, and later went to Cambridge. His greatest poem, *The Faerie Queene*, was written when he was living in Ireland. Many of the beautiful scenes which he describes in that poem are really pictures of the romantic woods and savage places which he knew in Kilooman. Spenser meant to write the poem in twelve books, telling the story of twelve knights, who went out to overcome dangers. Each knight represents a virtue, and the dangers against which they fought are vices. Gloriana, Queen of the Fairies, from whose court they start, is Queen Elizabeth of England. Other famous people of the day also appear. In fact, the poem is a pæan of praise for England, and it shows how, for the first time in history, England is aware that she has become a great nation. Here is a short extract from the poem.

THE MARRIAGE OF UNA TO ST. GEORGE

His own two hands the holy knots did knit,
That none but death for evér can divide;
His own two hands, for such a turn most fit,
The housling fire did kindle and provide,[1]
And holy water thereon sprinkled wide;
At which the bushy teade [2] a groom did light,
And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenchéd day nor night,
For fear of evil fates, but burnen ever bright.

1. i.e. he himself laid and lit the sacred fire for the communion. 2. Torch.

Then gan they sprinkle all the posts with wine,
And made great feast to solemnize that day:
They all perfumed with frankincense divine,
And precious odours fetched from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great array:
And all the while sweet music did apply
Her curious skill the warbling notes to play,
To drive away the dull melàncholy;
The whiles one sang a song of love and jollity.

During the which there was an heavenly noise
Heard sound through all the palace pleasantly,
Like as it had been many an angel's voice
Singing before th' Eternal Majesty,
In their trinal triplicities [3] on high:
Yet wist no creature whence that heavenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly
Himself thereby reft of his senses meet,
And ravishéd with rare impression in his sprite.[4]

3. Three-fold personality; i.e. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. 4. Spirit; i.e. soul.

Christopher Marlowe

(1564–93)

Very little is known about the life of Christopher Marlowe, the first great English dramatist. He appears to have spent some years at Cambridge, where his first play, *Tamburlaine*, was produced. We do know that he was killed early in life, in a tavern brawl at Deptford. His plays are famous fór the magnificent poetry which they contain. His other important dramas are *Dr. Faustus* and *Edward II.* He knew little about the humorous side of life; but Shakespeare found much in his work which was interesting and used Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta* for the basis of his own *Merchant of Venice.*

From "TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT", ACT I

[Tamburlaine, leader of the Tartars, tries to win over the Persian captain, whom he has taken prisoner, by promising him a great future if he will change sides.]

In thee, thou valiant man of Persia,
I see the folly of thy emperor.
Art thou but captain of a thousand horse,
That by charácters graven in thy brows,
And by thy martial face and stout aspéct,
Deserv'st to have the leading of an host?
Forsake thy king, and do but join with me,
And we will triumph over all the world.
I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about;
And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.
Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man-at-arms,
Intending but to raze my charméd skin,
And Jove himself will stretch his hand from Heaven
To ward the blow and shield me safe from harm.
See how he rains down heaps of gold in showers,
As if he meant to give my soldiers pay!

. . . .

If thou wilt stay with me, renowméd man,
And lead thy thousand horse with my condúct,
Besides thy share of this Egyptian prize,
Those thousand horse shall sweat with martial spo
Of conquered kingdoms and of cities sack'd.
Both we will walk upon the lofty cliffs,
And Christian merchants that with Russian stems[1]
Plough up huge furrows in the Caspian sea,
Shall vail[2] to us, as lords of all the lake.
Both we will reign as consuls of the earth,
And mighty kings shall be our senators.

1. i.e. Christian ships of Russian timber. 2. Bow.

Sir Walter Raleigh

(1552–1618)

Sir Walter Raleigh is the famous courtier, soldier, and adventurer of Queen Elizabeth's reign. He was also an author who helped to write, among other things, a History of the World. The following lines were written before his execution, in the reign of James I, while he was a prisoner in The Tower.

LINES ON THE EVE OF EXECUTION

Even such is Time, that takes on trust
 Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
 Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days!
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

William Shakespeare

(1564–1616)

Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon. After a short education at the local Grammar School he went to London at the age of twenty-two. There he met Marlowe and other dramatists and we can be certain that from them he learned much. His earliest plays were mostly comedies. Later he turned to tragedy, and wrote such famous plays as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*—to mention only a few. In his dramas are rousing ballads, melodious songs, graceful sonnets, bold adventurous passages of prose, and great rolling lines of blank verse. Like Chaucer, he gives us a complete picture of English life in his day, from the greatest kings to the meanest peasants. He understood why people act as they do, and had a deep sympathy for the little weaknesses which exist in all human beings He loved Nature, for he was born in a most beautiful part of

England. Above all he loved his fellow-men. Not only is he the greatest English poet; he is the greatest Englishman.

THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN
From *As You Like It* (Act II, Scene 7)

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,[1]
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,[2]
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,—
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

1. Leopard. 2. An ageing man sitting in the chimney corner.

WOLSEY'S FAREWELL ON HEARING OF HIS FALL FROM THE ROYAL FAVOUR[1]

From *Henry the Eighth* (Act III, Scene 2)

Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur'd,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me, and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:
I feel my heart new open'd. O how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,[2]
Never to hope again.

1. Some people think another poet-playwright, Fletcher, wrote these lines.
2. Satan—the angel who was cast out of Heaven.

KING HENRY V MUSES ON THE LONELINESS OF KINGSHIP

From *Henry V* (Act IV, Scene 1)

Upon the king!—let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives,
Our children and our sins lay on the king!
We must bear all. O hard condition,
Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath
Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel
But his own wringing! What infinite heart's-ease
Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!
And what have kings, that privates have not too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents? what are thy comings-in?
O ceremony, show me but thy worth!
What is thy soul of adoration?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy, being fear'd,
Than they in fearing.
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,
But poison'd flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
Think'st thou the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose:
I am a king that find thee, and I know

'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,[1]
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The inter-tissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced[2] title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world,
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
Who with a body fill'd and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread;
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell;
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus[3] and all night
Sleeps in Elysium;[4] next day, after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion[5] to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labour to his grave:
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil and nights with sleep,
Had the fore-hand and vantage of a king.
The slave, a member of the country's peace,
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

1. The lines refer to the coronation ceremony and the emblems of royalty used thereat.
2. Puffed-out—the recital by a herald of all the royal titles.
3. Apollo, the sun-god.
4. The Heaven of the Greeks.
5. Another name for the sun, whom the Greeks believed to ride across the sky in a chariot.

KING HENRY'S SPEECH BEFORE THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

From *Henry V* (Act IV, Scene 3)

Westmoreland. O that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day!
K. Henry. What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is call'd the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian':
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day'.
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

ANTONY'S ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF ROME

From *Julius Cæsar* (Act III, Scene 2.)

[Mark Antony, Cæsar's friend, is permitted, by Brutus and the conspirators who have murdered Cæsar, to speak to the people at his funeral. But he so words his speech as to rouse the people to avenge Cæsar's death.]

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interréd with their bones;
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault;
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men,—
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal [1]
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once,—not without cause:
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?
O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

. . . .

1. The platform on a certain public feast-day in Rome

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:—[2]
Look, in this place ran Cassius'[3] dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
[illegible]

As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar lov'd him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's[4] statua,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.
O what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

2. A tribe in Gaul.
3. This and the following names are those of the leading conspirators.
4. The great rival whom Cæsar had overthrown on his rise to power.

ROMEO IN THE GARDEN OF JULIET

From *Romeo and Juliet* (Act II, Scene 2.)

[The young Romeo, standing by night in the garden of the house of Juliet, with whom he is deeply in love, sees her at her window.]

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery [1] is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.—
It is my lady; O, it is my love!—
O, that she knew she were!—
She speaks, yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.—
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it were not night.—
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

1. The garments worn by girls before marriage.

THE DYING JOHN OF GAUNT PROPHESIES THE FALL OF RICHARD II

From *Richard II* (Act II, Scene 1)

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired
And thus expiring do foretell of him:
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder:
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
A[illegible]
T[illegible]
T[illegible]
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renownéd for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,

Like to a tenement or pelting [1] farm:
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds:
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death!

1. Petty.

POLONIUS' ADVICE TO HIS SON

From *Hamlet* (Act I, Scene 3)

[Laërtes, his son, is about to leave his home in Denmark to travel in France.]

There; my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou charácter.[1] Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.[2]
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment [3]
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't, that the opposéd may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.

1. Write down.
2. Does not mean "coarse" but "public", i.e. do not be friendly with people at first meeting.
3. i.e. do not cheapen yourself by welcoming.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.[4]
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

4. To " husband " is to save or take care of.

SONG

From *Twelfth Night*

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

SONG

From *As You Like It*

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! &c.

Thomas Campion

(1567–1619)

THE MAN OF LIFE UPRIGHT

The man of life upright,
Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds,
Or thought of vanity:

The man whose silent days
In harmless joys are spent,

Whom hopes cannot delude,
  Nor sorrow discontent:

That man needs neither towers
  Nor armour for defence,
Nor secret vaults to fly
  From thunder's violence.

He only can behold
  With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep
  And terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares
  That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
  His wisdom heavenly things;

Good thoughts his only friends,
  His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
  And quiet pilgrimage.

Michael Drayton

(1563–1631)

AGINCOURT

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
    Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
    Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort
Furnish'd in warlike sort,
Marcheth towards Agincourt
In happy hour;
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopp'd his way,
Where the French Gen'ral lay
With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide
Unto him sending;
Which he neglects the while
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men
Quoth our brave Henry then:
"Though they to one be ten,
Be not amazéd:
Yet have we well begun;
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
By fame been raiséd.

"And for myself (quoth he)
This my full rest shall be:
England ne'er mourn for me
Nor more esteem me:
Victor I will remain
Or on this earth lie slain,
Never shall she sustain
Loss to redeem me.

"Poitiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell:
No less our skill is
Than when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
Lopp'd the French Lilies."[1]

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vaward led:
With the main Henry sped
Amongst his henchmen;
Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there;
O Lord, how hot they were
On the false Frenchmen!

They now to fight are gone:
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,—
To hear was wonder;
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake:
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which did'st the signal aim
To our hid forces;

1. The lily-flower (Fleur-de-Lys) was the royal badge of France. Henry's ancestor Edward III had claimed the throne of France and won great victories at Cressy and Poitiers.

When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
Struck the French horses,

With Spanish yéw so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long
That like to serpents stung,
Piercing the weather;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw
And forth their bilboes[2] drew
And on the French they flew,
Not one was tardy;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went—
Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King,
His broad-sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,
As to o'erwhelm it;
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
Bruiséd his helmet.

Gloster, that Duke so good,
Next of the Royal blood,
For famous England stood
With his brave brother;

2. Swords.

Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made
Still as they ran up:
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry:
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?

Ben Jonson

(1573–1637)

Ben Jonson was perhaps second only to Shakespeare as a writer of plays. He had an adventurous youth, then was a poor student at Cambridge, and later became an actor. His best plays are comedies, of which *Everyman in his Humour*, *Volpone*, and *The Poetaster* are very polished works. He was a genial fellow; and round him at the Mermaid Tavern gathered most of the leading poets of his day, Shakespeare included. He was also poet laureate, and wrote charming and elegant verse of which the following is an example.

MY LADY'S TRIUMPH

See the Chariot at hand here of Love,
  Wherein my Lady rideth!
Each that draws is a swan or a dove,
  And well the car Love guideth.
As she goes, all hearts do duty
          Unto her beauty;
And enamour'd do wish, so they might
          But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side,
Through swords, through seas, whither she would ride.

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
  All that Love's world compriseth!
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
  As Love's star when it riseth!
Do but mark, her forehead's smoother
          Than words that soothe her;
And from her arch'd brows such a grace
          Sheds itself through the face,
As alone there triumphs to the life
All the gain, all the good, of the elements' strife.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
  Before rude hands have touch'd it?
Have you mark'd but the fall of the snow
  Before the soil hath smutch'd it?
Have you felt the wool of beaver,
          Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt o' the bud o' the brier,
          Or the nard [1] in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!

1. A sweet-smelling herb.

Robert Herrick

(1591–1674)

Herrick was a Cambridge man and a clergyman, who was driven from his church during the Civil War. He was not precisely a Cavalier poet, but his verses breathe all the joy of life which was typical of the Cavaliers.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Edmund Waller

(1605–87)

Waller was not a very likeable fellow, for during the Civil War he changed sides as he thought would pay him. His poems are often songs in the light, Cavalier style of which the following elegant verses are an example.

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die—that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

John Milton

(1608–74)

Milton is second to none (save possibly Shakespeare) among English poets. His greatest work consists of the very long *Paradise Lost*, and of three other poems, also long, *Paradise Regained, Comus*, and *Samson Agonistes*. These, and his shorter poems, are marked by the most majestic grandeur of style mixed with great beauty of expression and great wealth of learning.

He had a brilliant career at St. Paul's school and at Cambridge; and, being prominent in the Puritan party, was made foreign secretary under Cromwell. During this time he wrote, as well as poetry, some powerful books and pamphlets in support of the Puritans, and of their ideas and laws. During this time, too, he had the misfortune to become blind.

His life after Charles II returned to the throne was a sad one. He had been too prominent a Puritan to be shown any favour: his daughter, on whom he relied, had deserted him; and the blind poet was left, ageing and alone, among the triumphant Cavaliers whose ideas and beliefs he loathed.

The following poem, in praise of his master Cromwell, is one of the very fine sonnets written when he was at the height of his fame and power.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who, through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crownéd fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursued

While Darwen [1] stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular [2] chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.[3]

1. When Charles I fell, the army of the Scottish Covenanters opposed the English army under Cromwell, which had seized power. The Scots proclaimed Charles II and were defeated by Cromwell near Darwen in Lancashire, at Dunbar in Scotland, and finally at Worcester.

2. Worldly, unreligious.

3. Greed. Literally, stomach.

SATAN SAYS FAREWELL TO HEAVEN

From *Paradise Lost*

Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

THE MESSENGER BRINGS NEWS OF THE DEATH OF SAMSON

From *Samson Agonistes*

The building was a spacious theatre,
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand:
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
[illegible]
[illegible] wine,
[illegible]
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad: before him pipes
And timbrels;[1] on each side went armed guards;
Both horse and foot before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts[2] and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendous force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length, for intermission sake, they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard),
As over-tired, to let him lean a while

1. A sort of tambourine. 2. Heavily mailed men.

With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the archéd roof gave main support.
He unsuspicious led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:
"Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld;
Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength yet greater
As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed;
As with the force of winds and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar [3] only scaped, who stood without.

3. Common people.

James Graham, Marquess of Montrose

(1612–50)

Montrose was a Scottish soldier and statesman of great ability and personality, and, like many other gentlemen of his time, was also a poet. He supported the Covenanters in resisting Charles I's religious changes in Scotland, but stood for the king in the Civil War and all but reconquered Scotland in a brilliant campaign. He was later captured by the Covenanters and hanged.

TO KING CHARLES THE FIRST

Great, good, and just, could I but rate [1]
My grief, and thy too rigid fate,
I'd weep the world in such a strain
As it should deluge once again.
But since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies
More from Briareus' [2] hands than Argus' [2] eyes,
I'll sing thine obsequies with trumpet sounds,
And write thine epitaph in blood and wounds.

1. Reckon the value of.
2. In classical legend Briareus was a hundred-armed giant, Argus a man with a hundred eyes.

John Bunyan

(1628–88)

Bunyan was a man who became a very keen fighting Puritan. After the Civil War, when the Puritan religion was made illegal, he persisted in preaching; for which he was imprisoned for some years. He is best known for his great prose work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in which he tells the story of an ordinary man's struggle through the temptations of the world, which are represented by various characters—a type of story known as an Allegory. He also wrote some hymns and simple moral poems such as the following.

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

He that is down needs fear no fall,
  He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
  Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
  Little be it or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
  Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
  That go on pilgrimage:
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
  Is best from age to age.

Section III

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Our next period starts, roughly, at the time when James II was driven from the throne, and lasts until the tremendous events of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic wars disturbed all Europe.

This period is a time of learned scholarship among the aristocratic and upper middle classes, though there is no increase of education among the common people. It is also a time of great developments in English writing generally. Indeed, the middle of this period, when English authors were showing learning, wit, and dignity, and when the stupendous personality of Dr. Johnson dominated them all, has been called the Augustan Age—in comparison with the time of the Emperor Augustus, which had been the Golden Age of literature in Rome.

Curiously enough, the ability to write first-class plays, which had existed even in the frivolous days of Charles II, almost disappears, though you will probably enjoy the comedies of Sheridan—such as *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*—written near the end of the period we are discussing. None the less there was an increase of scholarly knowledge, and this led to the writing of many fine works on historical and other learned subjects by such men as Gibbon and Dr. Johnson.

Among these serious writings appears a type of work which is almost new—that is, the "Essay".

By the word Essay is meant a short piece of writing (which may be in length anything from a page or so to the size of a small book) in good style, on a subject in which the author is interested. The subject may be humorous, may be quite imaginary, or may be a matter of actual scholarship such as a scientific theory or the life of an historical character. Of course there had always been writers of essays, but only in this period do their writings really become popular and eagerly demanded; and Goldsmith and Johnson, Steele, Addison, and Swift are only a few of the great essayists of this time. It is interesting, too, to note that some of these, like Steele and Addison, by publishing their essays in papers which appeared at regular intervals (like our modern weekly reviews and magazines) started what afterwards developed into the journal or newspaper. *The Spectator*, for which Steele was mainly responsible, is the first of these periodical publications that is important.

Another development in this age lay in a form of writing which to-day is more prominent than any other—the "Novel". This started at the beginning of our period, when Daniel Defoe wrote the adventures of imaginary (or partly imaginary) characters like Robinson Crusoe. And this kind of rather rambling story grew into the skilfully planned novel as we know it to-day, with its constructed plot and carefully drawn characters of all types. Prominent among the early novelists were Fielding (who wrote *Tom Jones*), Sterne (who wrote *Tristram Shandy*), Smollet, and Richardson; and these men, in drawing pictures, usually of their own day, sometimes of other ages, often humorous, sometimes tragic, established a branch of literature in this country that has never really declined since their time. Indeed, at the end of this period Sir Walter Scott's historical romances showed, by the

eagerness with which they were bought and read, that the novel had definitely made for itself a permanent place in English writing.

Before turning more particularly to the poets we must mention two other great writers. The first of these, Gibbon, wrote, in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, as fine a model of what a history should be as is ever likely to be found. The second of these, Boswell, in writing the life of his friend Dr. Johnson, established a model also for biography —that is, for a true account of the life of any person.

Considering now the poets, we will recollect that the exciting days of the Elizabethans and the boisterous, if affected, times of the Cavaliers have gone. Englishmen are becoming more solemn in their outlook, and more attached to their town life, to their formal manners, and to their scholarly learning. It seems as if they try to avoid the natural boisterousness, and also the natural simplicity, of previous poets, and to write verse that shall be graceful, sensible, and—as it were—well-behaved. The result is that, though they are often witty, and though they have often important or moving thoughts to voice, their verse is not, perhaps, so generally entertaining to the ordinary reader, though the student finds their rather long and formal poems admirable. John Dryden (1631–1700) and Alexander Pope (1688–1744) are typical users of this "classical" style of verse. In the middle of the period, however, poets appear who are beginning to look beyond towns, and high society, and historical personages and deeds for their matter, and who are beginning to take an interest in simple country folk and in the ordinary scenes of nature—even if that interest is often expressed in rather highflown and severe language. Prominent among these poets are Gray (1716–71), Thomson (1700–48), Cowper (1731–1800), and Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74). Therefore, by the end of the period, when the effects of the French Revolution had nearly

destroyed all old manners, customs, and ways of thought, the poets were prepared for a new era. For they had already given up their formal, "classical" writing, and were starting, like Sir Walter Scott, to tell imaginary or historical stories of a stirring type, or, like Robert Burns and Wordsworth, to sing simply of country life and country people.

John Dryden

(1631–1700)

Dryden was educated at Westminster and Cambridge, and led the first revival of poetry after Milton's time. He wrote some plays, and was helped by influential people whom he flattered. He later turned to writing satires, which made him famous, and then he was able to show his great learning and deep poetic sense by a large output of polished verse, including translations of the great Latin poet, Virgil He was made Poet Laureate, and his poetry set the model for the severe and formal style which characterizes the period which begins with him. Most of the poems are long and the following is an extract from one of the satires.

A POLITICAL LEADER ADDRESSES THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH

[Party feeling at the time ran high and some people even wished to bring the Duke to the throne. The following is an imaginary speech tempting him to rebellion]

Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire:
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas, and shows the promis'd land:
Whose dawning day in every distant age
Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage:
The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!

Thee, Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess,
And, never satisfied with seeing, bless:
Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
Starve and defraud the people of thy reign?
Content ingloriously to pass thy days
Like one of virtue's fools that feed on praise;
Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow stale, and tarnish with our daily sight!
Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate:
Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,)
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent:[1]
But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,
And spreads her locks before her as she flies.

1. Direction.

FAIREST ISLE

[This is a song from a musical play, or opera, for which Dryden wrote the words. You will note the deliberately formal, polished, classical style: for example, the reference to Venus, goddess of beauty, and her supposed home in Cyprus; and to Cupid, god of love; and the use of the Greek word "nymph" for a maiden.]

Fairest isle, all isles excelling,
  Seat of pleasures and of loves;
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
  And forsake her Cyprian groves.

Cupid from his favourite nation
  Care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
  And despair, that dies for love.

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
  Sighs, that blow the fire of love;
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
  Shall be all the pains you prove.

Every swain shall pay his duty,
  Grateful every nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty,
  Those shall be renown'd for love.

Alexander Pope
(1688–1744)

Pope was a delicate and deformed little man, who took over Dryden's mantle, as it were, when Dryden died, and was the greatest poet of his day. He had a brilliant wit, and his verse is always scholarly and correct, if rather severe in style. He was much admired in his time, and in his villa at Twickenham could often be found many of the leading writers and wits of his day. Like his master, Dryden, he translated some of the Greek and Latin poets, wrote brilliant satires, and long formal poems, from one of which the following is an extract.

THE MESSIAH

No more shall nation against nation rise,
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
Nor fields with gleaming steel be covered o'er,
The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
And the broad falchion [1] in a ploughshare end.

1. Broadsword.

Then palaces shall rise; the joyful son
Shall finish what his short-lived sire begun;
Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,
And the same hand that sowed shall reap the field.
The swain in barren deserts with surprise
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles and the bulrush nods.
Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn:
To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
And odorous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flowery banks the tiger lead;
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.

Thomas Gray

(1716–71)

Gray was educated at Eton, and at Cambridge, where he became a professor. He was a somewhat glum and reflective man who delighted in travelling. His poems, of which the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* is world-famous, are not many, but are all of great merit; and though his style is formal and correct, nevertheless his choice and treatment of subject-matter mark a beginning of the breakaway from the rather rigid methods of Pope and Dryden. The following poem is in a lighter manner than he usually adopted.

ON A FAVOURITE CAT, DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed

The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but midst the tide

Their scaly armour's Tyrian [2] hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,.
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,

She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to ev'ry wat'ry god,

1. Spirits.
2. Tyre in olden days was famous for its purple dye

Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid[3] stirr'd:
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
A Fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize;
Nor all that glisters, gold.

3. Nereids were nymphs or fairies of the sea (according to the Greeks) who often helped mariners, and the Dolphins were said to be their steeds.

William Shenstone

(1714–63)

LINES WRITTEN AT AN INN AT HENLEY

To thee, fair Freedom, I retire,
From flattery, card, and dice, and din,
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
Than the low cot or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless power I reign,
And every health which I begin
Converts dull port to bright champagne,
Such freedom crowns it at an inn!

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate,
I fly from fashion's specious grin;
Freedom I love, and form I hate,
And choose my lodging at an inn.

Here, waiter, take my sordid ore,
  Which lackeys else might hope to win,—
It buys what courts have not in store,
  It buys me freedom at an inn.

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
  Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
  The warmest welcome at an inn!

Oliver Goldsmith

(1728–74)

Goldsmith was one of the great Doctor Johnson's circle. He was an Irishman of happy-go-lucky character who never really could settle down, who was always in debt, and who wrote poems, plays, histories—anything that would bring in funds. Much of his work, therefore, does not do justice to his very great ability. Among his longer poems is *The Deserted Village*, from which the following is taken. This poem describes (in language which, though formal, is yet more simple than that of most of the poetry of his day) a village—and the people who had once lived in it—which had been left by its inhabitants.

THE VILLAGE PREACHER AND THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

From *The Deserted Village*

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour:
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his agèd breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
  Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
  Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood: at his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

. . . .

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,

The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view,—
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault:
The village all declared how much he knew,
. . . .
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learnèd length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

1. *Use figures, i.e. keep accounts.*
2. Calculate how much liquid a vessel could hold.

William Cowper

(1731–1800)

Cowper was a very kindly poet, sometimes called the "Swan of Olney" from the place where he lived. He loved the country, and his verse, too, like that of Gray and Goldsmith, though somewhat formal, shows the tendency to turn away from the wit and severity of Dryden and Pope and to seek inspiration in the simplicity of nature. His output was large, and his long poem—*The Task*—was perhaps his best work; but he is most

remembered for shorter poems, especially for the kindly fun he pokes in "John Gilpin", which is printed here.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

Showing how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again.

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke[1] was he
Of famous London Town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton[2]
All in a chaise and pair.[3]

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise: so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of woman-kind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

1. Eke means "even" or "indeed". The train-bands were volunteer companies of city tradesmen and their apprentices. The joke is that, though they gave themselves great airs, they were much laughed at by real soldiers.
2. Now part of London. Then a village eight miles from the city. 3. A small hired carriage with two horses.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
  As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender [4]
  Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin: "That's well said;
  And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
  Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
  O'erjoyed was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
  She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
  But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
  Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
  Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
  To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
  Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
  As if Cheapside [5] were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
  Seiz'd fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again;

4. A craftsman who "dressed", or prepared, cloth.
5. The great shopping street of the old City of London.

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
  His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
  Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
  Although it griev'd him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
  Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
  Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came downstairs—
  "The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
  My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
  When I do exercise."[6]

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
  Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she lov'd,
  And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
  Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
  To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
  Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
  He manfully did throw.

6. i.e. a parade or drill of his train-band company.

Now see him mounted once again
  Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
  With caution and good heed!

But, finding soon a smoother road
  Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
  Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly", John he cried,
  But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
  In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
  Who cannot sit upright,
He *grasp'd the mane with both his hands*,
  And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
  Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
  Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or naught;
  Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he set out,
  Of running such a rig!

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
  Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
  At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
  The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
  As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry soul cried out, "Well done!"
As long as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
"He carries weight![7] he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men[8]
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle brac'd;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

7. In some horse races the jockey (or his horse) carries weights to prevent his having an unfair advantage over a heavier rider.

8. In those days the only decent roads had gates, or "turnpikes", across them every so often where the rider had to pay a fee, or toll. These tolls were spent on repairing the road.

Thus all through merry Islington [9]
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash [10]
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop! John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tir'd."
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

y part of London. Then a village a mile or so from the
hich many Londoners went to make sport on holidays.
place where a stream runs broad and very shallow
across the road.

The calender, amaz'd to see
  His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
  And thus accosted him:

"What news? What news? your tidings tell;
  Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come
  Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
  And lov'd a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
  In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
  And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here—
  They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
  His friend in merry pin,[11]
Return'd him not a single word,
  But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
  A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and, in his turn,
  Thus show'd his ready wit—
"My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

11. Mood.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
  That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton
  And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said:
  "*I am in haste to dine;*
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless [12] boast!
  For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He lost them sooner than at first—
  For why?—they were too big!

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting [13] down

12. Useless.

13. In those days of horse travel, various places along the roads were recognized stages, where the landlords of inns kept fresh supplies of horses to relieve those tired by the last stage and to take the traveller straight away to the next stage. This was the quickest way of travelling and was called "posting". So you get post-haste, post-chaise, post-horses, and post-boys (the drivers). Here "posting" means going fast.

Into the country far away,
  She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
  That drove them to the Bell—
"This shall be yours when you bring back
  My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went post-boy at his heels!—
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear,
  They rais'd the hue and cry:

"Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!"
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
  Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did—and won it too!—
  For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
  He did again get down.

Now let us sing—Long live the king,
  And Gilpin long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
  May I be there to see!

R. Cunninghame-Graham of Gartmore
(1735–97)

IF DOUGHTY DEEDS

If doughty deeds my lady please,
  Right soon I'll mount my steed;
And strong his arm and fast his seat,
  That bears frae me the meed.[1]
I'll wear thy colours in my cap,
  Thy *picture in my heart;*
And he that bends not to thine eye
  Shall rue it to his smart!
    Then tell me how to woo thee, Love;
      O tell me how to woo thee!
    For thy dear sake nae care I'll take,
        Tho' ne'er another trow[2] me.

If gay attire delight thine eye
  I'll dight me in array;[3]
I'll tend thy chamber door all night,
  And squire[4] thee all the day.

1. The prize in a tournament.
2. Trust or believe in. 3. Put myself in fine dress.
4. Wait in attendance on thee.

If sweetest sounds can win thine ear,
These sounds I'll strive to catch;
Thy voice I'll steal to woo thysel',
That voice that nane can match.
Then tell me how to woo thee, Love; etc.

But if fond love thy heart can gain,
I never broke a vow;
Nae maiden lays her skaith [5] to me,
I never loved but you.
For you alone I ride the ring,[6]
For you I wear the blue; [7]
For you alone I strive to sing,
O tell me how to woo!
Then tell me how to woo thee, Love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake nae care I'll take,
Tho' ne'er another trow me.

5. Lays her scathe or trouble at my door, i.e. I have never been in love and broken my promises.
6. A knightly achievement: the rider tried at full speed to lift a ring from a post with his lance.
7. The colour of one who is faithful.

William Blake

(1757–1827)

Both as an artist and poet Blake was somewhat of an oddity. He earned his living in London by publishing and printing editions of famous writers with his own very unusual illustrations. He also issued similarly illustrated editions of his own verse, most of which is rather difficult to understand. He was a man of intense religious zeal, and expressed his fervour with much the same far-flung imagination and fiery flow of

language that we find in the words of the old prophets like Isaiah—as the following poem amply shows.

JERUSALEM

[These verses form the introduction to a long poem upon Milton. In them Blake regrets lost purity and faith and resolves to restore them.]

And did those feet in ancient time
  Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
  On England's pleasant pasture seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
  Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
  Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
  Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!
  Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
  Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
  In England's green and pleasant land.

Robert Burns

(1759-96)

Burns was the son of a poor Ayrshire farmer; and his own life as farmer and poet, and later as a customs official, was also a struggle against poverty—without much success. This was partly his own fault, for he was of rather dissipated habits.

He had, however, a great love of nature and of mankind;

and he is unique in the extent to which he is venerated by Scotsmen, to whom he appeals through his simple homely sentiments expressed in Scots dialect.

FOR A' THAT, AND A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave—we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp;[1]
The man's the gowd[2] for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin[3] grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie,[4] ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof[5] for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

1. Guineas got their name from being made of African (Guinea Coast) gold; the royal stamp on the coin was a proof of the good quality of the gold. 2. Gold.
3. Natural colour wool. 4. Cocksure fellow. 5. Dolt.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon[6] his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa'[7] that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that,)
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree,[8] and a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man the warld o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.

6. Above.
7. Mauna fa' = cannot make happen.
8. Be supreme.

TO A MOUSE

On turning her up in her nest with the plough,
November, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle![1]
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle![2]

1. Hurried scamper.
2. Ploughman's stick.

His form was of the manliest beauty,
  His heart was kind and soft,
Faithful, below, he did his duty;
  But now he's gone aloft.

Tom never from his word departed,
  His virtues were so rare,
His friends were many and true-hearted,
  His Poll was kind and fair;
And then he'd sing so blithe and jolly,
  Ah, many's the time and oft!
But mirth is turned to melancholy,
  For Tom is gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather,
  When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call life's crew together,
  The word to pipe all hands.[3]
Thus Death, who kings and tars despatches
  In vain Tom's life has doffed,
For, though his body's under hatches,
  His soul has gone aloft.

3. The hands or crew in a ship are summoned to any duty by a small pipe blown by the boatswain.

Sir Walter Scott

(1771–1832)

Scott is a very great figure indeed in English letters. He was a Scottish gentleman of great kindness and generosity, of wide interests and ability. He was quick to take fire from the romantic stories of history of olden times, and of the Scottish border where he lived. When he was over fifty, a business in which he was concerned went bankrupt, and he was saddled with a huge debt. He was already known as a poet and had begun his great series of historical novels—known as the Waverley Novels.

He now worked tirelessly to pay off his debts, though he wore *himself out in doing so. As a poet he wrote largely of the stirring* times of history. In addition to the long poems *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, he wrote many short songs and ballads.

BREATHES THERE THE MAN WITH SOUL SO DEAD

From *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
[illegible]

High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

THE NIGHT OF FLODDEN

From *Marmion*

[In 1513 King James IV of Scotland suddenly invaded England. On the approach of the English army under the Earl of Surrey, the Scottish king defended a hill called Flodden Edge near the Scottish border. In the first charge a part of the Scots army, led by Huntly and Home, swept away the English

opposed to them; but instead of remaining on the field, pursued them in order to plunder, thereby leaving King James and his spearmen exposed to the English archers. They suffered a terrible defeat and the king was slain. The critical moment of the battle came in the evening when Lord Stanley pressed home an attack made by the men of Cheshire and Lancashire. You are watching this phase of the battle from a little distance, by the side of the dying English knight Marmion.]

The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
  And Stanley! was the cry;—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
  And fired his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
  And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward [1] wing,
  Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O, for a blast of that dread horn,[2]
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
  That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,

1. Leading.
2. An old legend tells how Roland, a paladin (or knight) of Charles the Great, defended the defile of Roncesvalles in the district of Fuentarrabia in Spain to the last man. A blast of his horn reached the ears of Charles, who brought back the main army in time to withstand the enemy.

And every paladin and peer,
  On Roncesvalles died!
Such blasts might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
  While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
  Our Caledonian pride!

. . . .

The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
  That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go
Though bill-men [3] ply the ghastly blow,
  Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
  The instant that he fell.

No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried [4] phalanx [5] tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
  As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;

3. A bill was a long-handled weapon that had both a point like a spear and a cutting blade like an axe.
4. Rank upon rank.
5. A formation by which troops were massed in a close-packed body.

And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field, as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

BRIGNALL BANKS

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton Hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily:
"O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green!

I'd rather rove with Edmund there
  Than reign our English Queen."

"If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me
  To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
  That dwell by dale and down.
And if thou canst that riddle read,
  As read full well you may,
Then to the green-wood shalt thou speed
  As blithe as Queen of May."

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
  And Greta woods are green!
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
  Than reign our English Queen.

"I read you by your bugle horn
  And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn
  To keep the King's green-wood."—
"A Ranger, Lady, winds his horn,
  And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
  And mine at dead of night."

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
  And Greta woods are gay!
I would I were with Edmund there,
  To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnish'd brand and musketoon
  So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
  That lists the tuck [1] of drum."—

1. Tap.

"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

"And O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle [2] must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden, a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead [3]
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the green-wood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

2. Much. 3. i.e. Will-o'-the-Wisp.

Charles Wolfe

(1791–1823)

[In 1809 the British army in Spain had retreated before superior French forces to their ships in the harbour of Corunna. Before they could embark they had to drive off the pursuing French; and their general, Sir John Moore, was killed in the hour of victory.]

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AFTER CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
  As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
  O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
  The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
  And the lanthorn dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
  Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
  With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
  And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
  And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed
  And smooth'd down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
  And we far away on the billow!

[illegible]
  [illegible]
[illegible]
  In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
  When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
  That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

Thomas Campbell

(1777–1844)

Campbell was a Glasgow man, who, living in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, was stirred by the heroic events of his days, and produced a number of poems on war-like subjects. A fine swing and an easy style made him once very popular, but nowadays only a few of his best poems are remembered.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy tempests blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And ocean was their grave.
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep
While the stormy tempests blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
  No towers along the steep;[1]
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
  Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
  She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore
  When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
  And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
  Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart
  And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors!
  Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
  When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
  And the storm has ceased to blow!

1. Cliff.

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

A Chieftain, to the Highlands bound,
  Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
  To row us o'er the ferry."

"Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,
  This dark and stormy water?"
"O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
  And this Lord Ullin's daughter.

"And fast before her father's men
  Three days we've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen,
  My blood would stain the heather.

"His horsemen hard behind us ride;
  Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
  When they have slain her lover?"

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
  "I'll go, my chief—I'm ready:
It is not for your silver bright;
  But for your winsome lady:

"And by my word! the bonny bird
  In danger shall not tarry:
So though the waves are raging white,
  I'll row you o'er the ferry."

By this the storm grew loud apace,
  The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of Heaven each face
  Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
  And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armed men,
  Their tramping sounded nearer.

"O haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,
  "Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
  But not an angry father."

The boat has left a stormy land,
  A stormy sea before her,—

When, oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gather'd o'er her.

And still they row'd amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reach'd that fatal shore,
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For sore dismay'd, through storm and shade,
His child he did discover:
One lovely hand she stretch'd for aid,
And one was round her lover.

"Come back! Come back!" he cried in grief,
"Across this stormy water:
And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter!—oh, my daughter!"

'Twas vain:—the loud waves lash'd the shore,
Return or aid preventing:—
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

THE BATTLE OF HOHENLINDEN

[In 1805, at Hohenlinden, on the River Iser, in Bavaria, the French, under Moreau, defeated the Austrians.]

On Linden when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,
Each warrior drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neighed
  To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of Heaven,
  Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet those fires shall glow
On Linden's hills of blood-stained snow,
And bloodier yet shall be the flow
  Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn! but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun [1]
  Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! [2] all thy banners wave,
  And charge with all thy chivalry.

Few, few shall part, where many meet,
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
  Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

1. The Franks were the race from whom originally the French were largely descended; and the Huns were a tribe, many of whose descendants settled in Hungary, which was part of the Austrian dominions.

2. Munich is the chief city of Bavaria.

Allan Cunningham
(1784–1842)

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
  A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
  And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
  While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies and leaves
  Old England on the lee.[1]

O for a soft and gentle wind!
  I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
  And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my boys,
  The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
  And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornéd moon,
  And lightning in yon cloud;
And hark the music, mariners!
  [illegible]
[illegible]
  [illegible]
[illegible]
  Our heritage the sea.

1. Lee-side = the side away from the wind.

Section IV

ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETS

The period we are about to deal with is, roughly speaking, that of the last century. It was a time of very great progress in every way: a time during which Modern England, as we know it, was being formed. In no branch of life was progress greater than in the education of the people. In 1800, few people had really been to school; and most people could scarcely read more than simple words or write much more than their own names. But by 1900 everybody had been to school, and having had a reasonable education felt a great desire for reading, which in its turn caused a great demand for books. There were now more people, too, who, thanks to their education, were able to write what they thought in a way that was interesting to their fellow-men; and, as the demand for books made it worth their while to do so, the number of writers of real ability is very large. To deal with them fully would in itself require a separate volume; and here we can mention only a few of them. You must remember, therefore, that those of whom we are going to speak are not the only prominent writers of this time. For instance, when we refer to Macaulay as a historian, he is only one of many good historical writers. Another thing that should be borne in mind is that during this time men no longer wrote in water-tight compartments. That is to say, it is no longer possible to speak of a man as being a poet only, or a novelist only, or an essayist only.

Even in the previous period many authors had worked, like Scott, in more than one branch of writing, and in this period it is common for them to do so. For example, Ruskin, who was a writer upon art, also wrote much upon problems rising from the living and working conditions of his time: Macaulay, who was a historian, also wrote poems and essays; those who are poets only or, say, essayists only, are rare.

The first part of this time is often called the Romantic Period,[1] for in it writers loved to hark back to Mediæval and other past ages for their themes, and to tell fanciful and often highly dramatic tales of bygone, or even of imaginary, days. But at the same time, there was also a strong group of nature-loving writers; and, as the period progressed, interests became so wide that, long before 1900, one must give up any attempt to label English writing as being devoted to any particular subject or style. The most that one can say is, first, that there was a tendency, after 1850, to describe the life of the times and especially to call attention to existing evils; and, second, that a great gift for light, almost nonsensical humour, appears in certain authors to balance, as it were, the seriousness of others. You will already know of this sense of fun, as it is clearly found in the books of Lewis Carroll, and the words of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

As in the previous period, it still is curious that, in a time of such great literary activity, writing for the stage should be at a very low ebb; and it is only at the end of this period that plays of merit appear with any regularity. But the craft of the novelist developed beyond recognition. Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), who had lived on from our previous period, was merely the first and most important of a number of his-

[1] For the information of those interested, the expression "Romantic" comes from the "Romance language" which, in Mediæval times, was spoken in the south of France, where the poets and story-tellers loved to relate highly fanciful tales.

torical novelists such as Lord Lytton, Charles Reade, and Charles Kingsley. There is a great group who write (sometimes humorously, sometimes bitterly, but always with a fine gift of drawing characters) about the living conditions of their times: such are Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Disraeli, and George Eliot. There were also some who, like W. M. Thackeray, wrote novels of more than one type.

Essayists were numerous. Many of them, like Lamb, were humorous and kindly; others, like Hazlitt and Carlyle, were pointed and severe; others like Matthew Arnold and Ruskin were learned and profound. These, too, are only a few names and types selected from many.

So, too, the output of long books on academic subjects of every sort was considerable. It was a great age for authorship, and, as one would expect in a country where everyone is—or should be—educated, it has endured.

Poets, like writers in other walks of literature, were numerous. The century starts with the great Romantic school, of which Scott was the forerunner, through his historical tales and poems. We have Shelley (1792–1822) who, in his short and stormy life, produced poetry of the deepest imaginative quality; and in this he was rivalled (though in a more gentle way) by his equally short-lived friend Keats (1795–1821). Keats provided beauty where Shelley breathed fire; and their contemporary, Samuel Coleridge (1772–1834), perhaps excelled them both in sheer range of imagination. These poets, besides being "romantics", were lovers of nature, worthy to live and write at the same time as the great nature poet William Wordsworth (1770–1850). When these poets had died, Lord Tennyson—who could combine something of the fairy music of Keats with the romantic story-telling of Scott—the highly original Robert Browning, and the serious, polished, Matthew Arnold, were ready to follow them. And

they, in their turn, have been followed by others up to our own day. There were, too, many other poets only slightly less great than these, and many minor poets who, from time to time, produced verses of much merit.

It is no use trying to say precisely that they were tied to any definite type of subject upon which to write. You can call the early group (Scott, Shelley, Keats) "romantic poets", but they wrote also on nature and other subjects; and, later on, it is still more impossible to say of any poet that he was limited in his subject and manner, as in the previous period you had been able to say that the verses were formal in style and largely concerned with learning, with classical subjects, or with polished wit.

William Wordsworth

(1770–1850)

Wordsworth is among the greatest of English poets and was perhaps the first to draw his inspiration entirely from Nature. He wrote long poems on deep and serious subjects, but it is for his shorter and simpler verses that he is chiefly read. He is best remembered by his verses on country subjects. He lived for the greater part of his long life in the Lake District of Cumberland, to which he was very much attached; and for this reason he and other poets who were his friends and neighbours are often called " The Lake School ". These included Coleridge and Southey, and both Wordsworth and Southey had the honour of being Poet Laureate.

ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

ENGLAND 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
O raise us up, return to us again,
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power!
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

DAFFODILS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

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  Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
  Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay,
  In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

(1792–1822)

Shelley was a turbulent fellow, but among the greatest poets. Both at Eton and Oxford anyone in authority was "tyrant"; and during his short life he loved to attack bot Church and Government. For this reason he left England fo Italy, where he was drowned in a storm in the gulf of Spezzi His verses show great depth of thought and magnificent visio imagination, and power, which make them alternatively ve joyous or full of the deepest gloom. His long poems, *The Revo of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*, and tragic drama in vers *The Cenci*, are landmarks in English poesy. The following an extract from *Adonais*, the poem he wrote on the death of h friend and fellow-poet, Keats.

FROM ADONAIS

("Adonais" is the poet Keats)

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,

And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel:[1] fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay

He has outsoared the shadow of our night:
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again:
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

1. Vault.

John Keats

(1795–1821)

Like his friend Shelley, Keats was a great romantic poet. He was always delicate in health, and died with much of his early promise unfulfilled. What he has left, however, is characterized by an almost fairy-like beauty. He was a great admirer of Greek and Latin literature and a great lover of mediæval stories: both of these interests are revealed in his poetry. The

opening of his long poem *Endymion* is " A thing of beauty is a joy for ever ", and this line really sums up his outlook on life. The love of mediæval legend, and the fairy-like atmosphere mixed with a suggestion of supernatural horror, which are typical of the " romantic " poets, are clearly seen in the following poem.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

" O what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

" O what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

" I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

" I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child.
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

" I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;[1]
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

" I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

1. Girdle.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,[2]
And sure in language strange she said
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lulléd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale Kings and Princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam[3]
With horrid warning gapéd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And that is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing."

2. Manna = honey-sweet.
3. Twilight.

Lord Byron

(1788–1824)

Byron was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, where, though lame, he was somewhat of an athlete. In himself, though of a brilliant personality, he was not very loveable; for he was vain, quarrelsome, and of unreliable habits. He travelled very widely and was quick to catch the romantic and colourful atmosphere of the Mediterranean and of the East. This is reflected in many of his poems. His large output of verse was once widely popular; but it is now recognized that much of it is only a fine sounding noise. At his best, however, he has a strong command of language, great power of description, and a dramatic sense of telling a tale. Of his many long poems the witty satire *Don Juan* and the great travel poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are the most noteworthy. The Greek struggle for independence from Turkey appealed strongly to him, and having gone to the aid of the Greeks, he died of fever at Missolonghi.

THE EVE OF WATERLOO

From *Childe*[1] *Harold's Pilgrimage*

[The Duchess of Richmond gave a ball in Brussels the night before the officers left the city to join their regiments.]

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell.

1. An old English title for a young man of gentle birth.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street.
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before.
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

THE VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

[The story is from the Bible and is in the Book of Daniel, Chapter V.]

I

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps [1] throng'd the hall:
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah [2] deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine.

II

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

1. Governors of Provinces.
2. The Hebrew people. Jehovah was the Hebrew name for God, and the gold cups are the Temple vessels which the Babylonians had taken when they carried the Hebrews into captivity.

III

The monarch saw, and shook,
  And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
  And tremulous his voice.
"Let the men of lore appear,
  The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
  Which mar our royal mirth."

IV

Chaldea's [3] seers are good,
  But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
  Untold and awful still.
And Babel's [4] men of age
  Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
  They saw—but knew no more.

V

A captive in the land,
  A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
  He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
  The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
  The morrow proved it true.

3. A kingdom which was neighbour to Babylon in what is now 'Iraq. Its people, who were famous as prophets and interpreters of dreams, had been conquered by the Babylonians.

4. The City of Babylon.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were fi
And many a tyrant since: their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless

LOVE

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armèd man,
The statue of the armèd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

. . . .

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
    Interpreted my own.

. . . .

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
    Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
    In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,[1]
    This miserable Knight!

And that, unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
    The Lady of the Land;—

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
    The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
    A dying man he lay;—

1. Her disdain has driven him mad so that when he s
her in dreams he thinks he sees an evil spirit.

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity.

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin shame;
And, like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

. . . .

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

Charles Lamb

(1775–1834)

Lamb was a clerk in East India House, and is little considered as a poet, for his fame rests upon the brilliance of his essay writing. In this he ranges from kindly simple humour to the most learned observations. He wrote, with his sister, a well-known children's book—*Tales from Shakespeare*—while the essays he wrote under the name of " Elia " will always be read.

HESTER

When maidens such as Hester die
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit:

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call: if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool;
But she was train'd in Nature's school;
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind;
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind;
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind;
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning—

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning?

James Leigh Hunt

(1784–1859)

Like Lamb, Leigh Hunt was at school at Christ's Hospital, and was also better known as an essayist than as a poet. He was imprisoned for a short while for a libel on George IV, but later received a government pension in recognition of his services to literature.

ABOU BEN ADHEM

And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said: "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Thomas Love Peacock

(1785–1866)

THE WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR [1]

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met an host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
We met them, and o'erthrew them:
They struggled hard to beat us;
But we conquered them, and slew them.

1. i.e. Great Dinas.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
Spilt blood enough to swim in:
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen;
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

Tom Hood

(1798–1845)

Hood was well known in his own day as a pathetic poet. But his serious work is now little read and he is best known as a comic poet with an extraordinary gift for punning—which is clearly shown in the following verses.

FAITHLESS NELLIE GRAY

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
  And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
  So he laid down his arms!

Now as they bore him off the field,
  Said he, "Let others shoot:
For here I leave my second leg,
  And the Forty-second Foot![1]"

The army surgeons made him limbs:
  Said he, "They're only pegs:
But there's as wooden members quite
  As represent my legs!"

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
  Her name was Nellie Gray;
So he went to pay her his devours,[2]
  When he'd devoured his pay.

But when he called on Nellie Gray,
  She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
  Began to take them off!

"O Nellie Gray! O Nellie Gray!
  Is this your love so warm?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
  Should be more uniform!"

1. It was formerly the custom to number regiments instea of naming them from their counties, &c., as now.
2. Respects.

Said she, "I loved a soldier once,
For he was blithe and brave;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow;
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now!"

"O Nellie Gray! O Nellie Gray!
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call I left my legs
In Badajos's [3] breaches!"

"Why then," said she, "you've lost the feet
Of legs in war's alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms!"

"O false and fickle Nellie Gray,
I know why you refuse:—
Though I've no feet—some other man
Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face;
But, now, a long farewell.
For you will be my death;—alas!
You will not be my Nell!"

Now when he went from Nellie Gray,
His heart so heavy got,
And life was such a burden grown,
It made him take a knot! [4]

3. The Duke of Wellington took Badajoz, in Spain, by storm.
4. A knot was a porter's pad for bearing a load.

So round his melancholy neck
  A rope he did entwine,
And, for the second time in life,
  Enlisted in the Line![5]

One end he tied around a beam,
  And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off, of course,
  He soon was off his legs!

And there he hung, till he was dead
  As any nail in town,—
For though distress had cut him up,
  It could not cut him down!

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
  To find out why he died,
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
  With a stake in his inside![6]

5. Line regiments were the regular infantry.
6. It was once the custom to bury suicides at cross-roads.

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN

Young Ben he was a nice young man,
  A carpenter by trade;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
  That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetched a walk one day,
  They met a press-gang[1] crew;
And Sally she did faint away,
  Whilst Ben he was brought to.[2]

1. When the Navy was short of men parties of sailors were sent ashore to "press" or seize likely looking men.
2. A sailor's term for stopping a ship suddenly.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,
  Enough to shock a saint,
That though she did seem in a fit,
  'Twas nothing but a feint.

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head.
  He'll be as good as me;
For when your swain is in our boat,
  A boatswain he will be."

So when they'd made their game of her,
  And taken off her elf,
She roused, and found she only was
  A-coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"
  She cried, and wept outright:
"Then I will to the water-side,
  And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,
  "Now, young woman," said he,
"If you weep on so, you will make
  Eye-water in the sea."

"Alas! they've taken my beau Ben
  To sail with old Benbow;"[3]
And her woe began to run afresh,
  As if she'd said, Gee woe!

Says he, "They've only taken him
  To the Tender-ship, you see;"
"The Tender ship!" cried Sally Brown,
  "What a hard-ship that must be!

3. A well-known fighting admural.

"Oh! would I were a mermaid now,
  For then I'd follow him;
But oh!—I'm not a fish-woman,
  And so I cannot swim.

"Alas! I was not born beneath
  The Virgin and the Scales,[4]
So I must curse my cruel stars,
  And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sailed to many a place
  That's underneath the world;
But in two years the ship came home,
  And all her sails were furled.

But when he called on Sally Brown,
  To see how she went on,
He found she'd got another Ben,
  Whose Christian name was John.

"O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,
  How could you serve me so?
I've met with many a breeze before,
  But never such a blow."

Then reading on his 'bacco-box,
  He heaved a bitter sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
  And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing "All's Well,"
  But could not though he tried;

4. Expressions from the old quackery of fortu
from the Heavens: it means she was not born to cros

His head was turned, and so he chewed
His pigtail [5] till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befell:
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton tolled the bell.

5. Sailors in the Navy grew their hair long and tied it in a queue or "pigtail" at the back.

Thomas Babington Macaulay

(1800–59)

Many stories are told of how Macaulay, as a child, had extraordinary powers of memory, of learning, and of speech. He preserved these qualities when he grew up; and he became a statesman as well as a poet and a writer. As a statesman he is most famous for the code of law that he drew up in India. As a writer he was not really a poet, but was a famous essayist and the author of a brilliantly written *History of England*. He produced, however, a group of poems called *Lays of Ancient Rome*, from which the following extract is taken.

HORATIUS

[There are many stories, mainly or entirely imaginary, of heroic deeds in the early days of Rome. Macaulay has taken one of these and enlarged upon it. Rome then consisted only of the city and the land round about. The rest of Central Italy was inhabited by other peoples whom Rome had not yet mastered. Lars Porsena was the chief of one of these peoples, and the other names given are those of probably imaginary chiefs and warriors. Sextus was a Roman traitor. The names of places used by Macaulay are of districts and landmarks near Rome,

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4. Expressions from the old quackery of fortune-telling from the Heavens: it means she was not born to cross the sea.

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some, perhaps, imaginary. The neighbouring peoples often banded themselves together to attack Rome, and this is the story of how a surprise attack was foiled by a brave deed.]

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin [1]
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,

1. A line of bad kings whom the Romans had driven out, in order to set up a republic.

And many a banished Roman,
  And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
  To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name.

But by the yellow Tiber
  Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
  To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
  The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
  Through two long nights and days.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,[2]
  Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
  Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
  They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
  With tidings of dismay.

To eastward and to westward
  Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecot
  In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
  Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,[3]
  And the stout guards are slain.

2. A rock on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, over which traitors were thrown.
3. A fortress near the city.

I wis, in all the Senate,
  There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
  When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,[4]
  Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
  And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
  Before the River-Gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
  For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly:
  "The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
  Nought else can save the town."

Just then a scout came flying,
  All wild with haste and fear:
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
  Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
  The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
  Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
  Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
  The trampling, and the hum.

4. Republican Rome had two chief magistrates called consuls.

And plainly and more plainly
  Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
  The long array of spears.

Fast by the royal standard,
  O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
  Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
  That wrought the deed of shame.

But when the face of Sextus
  Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
  From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
  But spat towards him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses,
  And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
  And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
  And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
  Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
  What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,
  The Captain of the Gate:

"To every man upon this earth
  Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
  Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
  And the temples of his Gods,

"And for the tender mother
  Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
  His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens [5]
  Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
  That wrought the deed of shame?

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
  With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
  Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
  May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
  And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
  A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
  And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
  Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
  And keep the bridge with thee."

5. The Vestal Virgins, or priestesses, who saw that the fire at the altar was always kept burning.

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
  "As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
  Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
  Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
  In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party;
  Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
  And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned:
  Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
  In the brave days of old.

Now while the Three were tightening
  Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
  To take in hand an axe:
And Fathers mixed with Commons
  Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
  And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
  Right glorious to behold,
[illegible]
[illegible]
  [illegible]
Four hundred trumpets sounded
  A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,

And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth:
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;

And Lausulus of Urgo,
  The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
  Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
  Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns:
  Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
  Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
  No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
  Thy thrice accursed sail."

But now no sound of laughter
  Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamour
  From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
  Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
  To win the narrow way.

But hark! the cry is Astur:
  And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
  Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
  Clangs loud the four-fold shield,

And in his hand he shakes the brand
  Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
  A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
  And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter [6]
  Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
  If Astur clears the way?"

Then, whirling up his broadsword
  With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
  And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
  Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
  To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
  He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
  Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
  So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
  Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
  Fell at that deadly stroke,

6. i.e. Romans. The founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were said to have been reared by a she-wolf.

As falls on Mount Alvernus
  A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
  The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs,[7] muttering low,
  Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
  Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
  Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
  Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo[8] comes next
  To taste our Roman cheer?"

But at his haughty challenge
  A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
  Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
  Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
  Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
  Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
  In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
  Where those bold Romans stood,

7. A kind of priest supposed to be able to tell from the entrails of a dead beast or bird if an action would lead to success or not.

8. A name for the nobility of Etruria.

All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
  Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
  To lead such dire attack:
But those behind cried "Forward!"
  And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

Yet one man for one moment
  Strode out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
  And they gave him greeting loud.
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
  Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he at the city;
  Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
  And thrice turned back in dread:
And, white with fear and hatred,
  Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
  The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever
  Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
  Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
  Back, ere the ruin fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
  Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
  They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
  And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
  They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
  Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
  Lay right athwart the stream:
And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow [9] foam.

And, like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career,

9. The waters of the river Tiber were yellowish in colour.

Battlement, and plank, and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
  "Now yield thee to our grace."

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Nought spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus nought spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
  That rolls by the towers of Rome.

"Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
  To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
  Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
  The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back,
  Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
  Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
  Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges

They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bare bravely up his chin.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;

And now, with shouts and clapping,
  And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
  Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land,
  That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
  Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
  And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
  To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,[10]
  Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
  Halting upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
  In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
  Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
  To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno[11]
  For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
  In the brave days of old.

10. A public meeting place in Rome.
11. Queen of the Roman gods.

Arthur Hugh Clough
(1819–61)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
  The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
  It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
  And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
  Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
  Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
  When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
  But westward, look, the land is bright!

Sir F. H. Doyle
(1810–88)

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS

[In the 1860 war with China an English soldier and some sepoys were taken prisoner. They were ordered to prostrate themselves before the Chinese officers: the Englishman refused and was killed. *The Buffs* are the East Kent Regiment.]

Last night, among his fellow roughs,
He jested, quaffed, and swore;
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before.
To-day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's[1] place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
Bewildered, and alone,
A heart with English instinct fraught
He yet can call his own.
Aye, tear his body limb from limb,
Bring cord, or axe, or flame:
He only knows, that not through him
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,
Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleamed,
One sheet of living snow;
The smoke above his father's door
In grey soft eddyings hung:
Must he then watch it rise no more,
Doomed by himself, so young?

Yes, honour calls!—with strength like steel
He put the vision by.
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;
An English lad must die.
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
To his red grave he went.

1. The first viceroy of India appointed by the Queen after the Indian Mutiny.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,[2]
Because his soul was great.

2. Sparta was a city-state of ancient Greece whose people were famous for their heroism.

Charles Kingsley
(1819–75)

Kingsley was a clergyman, who became Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and a famous novelist. He was always very interested in improving the condition of the working classes, especially of child workers. This is shown by several of his stories—for example, *The Water Babies.* Some of his novels like the well-known *Westward Ho!*, are historical. He also wrote a number of poems.

ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

Welcome, wild Northeaster!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr,[1]
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black Northeaster!
O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,

1. Light breeze.

Showers soft and steaming,
  Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
  Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter,
  Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
  Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
  Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl,
  Fill the marsh with snipe,
While on dreary moorlands
  Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir forest
  Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow flakes
  Off the curdled sky.
Hark! The brave Northeaster!
  Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
  Over heath and bent.[2]
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
  Through the sleet and snow:
Who can over-ride you?
  Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
  Down the roaring blast:
You shall see a fox die
  Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
  Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
  O'er the frozen streams.

2. A bare stretch of grassy land.

Let the luscious South-wind
  Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
  Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
  Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard grey weather
  Breeds hard Englishmen.
What's the soft Southwester?
  'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true loves
  Out of all the seas.
But the black Northeaster,
  Through the snow-storm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
  Seaward round the world.
Come! as came our fathers,
  Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
  Lords by land and sea.
Come! and strong within us
  Stir the Vikings' blood:
Bracing brain and sinew,
  Blow, thou wind of God!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

(1809-92)

With the possible exception of Browning, Tennyson was the outstanding poet of the middle of last century, and was made Poet Laureate in 1850. He was very polished, had a wonderful gift for finding music in words, was skilful in describing scenery, and knew how most beautifully to tell a story. Of his great amount of verses the following longer poems are to be noted: *In Memoriam*, a poem on the death of his friend Hallam; *The*

Idylls of the King, a set of romantic stories of King Arthur and his knights; *Maud*; and *The Princess*, a poem on the question (then very important) of whether women were the mental equals of men. He wrote many short poems, which are now better known than his more ambitious works.

SIR GALAHAD

[An old legend tells of a King Arthur whose knights aimed at being models of chivalry. They sought the Holy Grail, which was said to be the cup into which had flowed the blood from the side of our Lord on the Cross. This was to be a prize for the most virtuous, and it fell to Galahad because, though he was far less renowned than many other knights, he was entirely pure of life and unselfish.]

I

My good blade carves the casques [1] of men,
   My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
   Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
   The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
   The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
   And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
   That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

II

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
   On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
   To save from shame and thrall: [2]

1. Steel headpiece. 2. Captivity.

IV

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
  I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
  I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
  Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
  On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
  My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
  And star-like mingles with the stars.

(F 241)

V

When on my goodly charger borne
  Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
  The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
  And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
  And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height:
  No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
  Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

VI

A maiden knight—to me is given
  Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
  That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
  Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
  Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
  This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
  Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

VII

The clouds are broken in the sky,
  And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
  Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
  Wings flutter, voices hover clear:

"O just and faithful knight of God!
  Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
  By bridge and ford, by park and pale,[3]
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
  Until I find the holy Grail.

3. Fenced-in land.

SONG FROM "THE PRINCESS"

The splendour falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
  And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls:
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Robert Browning

(1812–89)

As a young man Browning fell in love with a poetess, Elizabeth Barrett (Mrs. Browning) and carried her off and married her, against her parents' wishes, in the most romantic sort of way; and as she was very delicate they lived the rest of their lives in Italy.

He is one of the greatest poets—and one of the most unusual. He had great knowledge, and a great depth of thought; but he often expressed them in phrases that are very hard to understand at first sight. Yet he could tell an excellent story, could create a wonderful atmosphere, and was very clever at devising out-of-the-way rhymes—as you will see.

He wrote very many long poems (of which *The Ring and The Book*, *Pippa Passes*, and *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* are worth bearing in mind) and a large number of shorter verses.

In the following poem he draws a picture of the olden times when chemists pretended to be magicians and dealt in love-philtres and in poisons. Here you see a jealous court lady going to such a chemist for a poison to kill her rival.

THE LABORATORY

(Ancien Régime)

I

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

II

He is with her; and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.

III

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

IV

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?

V

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree-basket!

VIII

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me—
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, 'no!'
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

IX

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall,
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

X

Not that I bid you spare her the pain!
Let death be felt and the proof remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face!

XI

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose,
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee—
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

XII

Now take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

THE PATRIOT

I

It was roses, roses, all the way,
  With myrtle mixed in my path like mad.
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
  The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
    A year ago on this very day!

II

The air broke into a mist with bells,
  The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folks, mere noise repels—
  But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,
  To give it my loving friends to keep!
Nought man could do, have I left undone;
  And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, *now a year is run.*

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
  Just a palsied few at the windows set—
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
  At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
  A rope cuts both my wrists behind;

And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

VI

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In such triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the World,—what dost thou owe
Me?" God might question: now instead
'Tis God shall repay! I am safer so.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sate in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder [1] I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat!
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

1. *In those days, a small gold coin.*

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone!"

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary [2] I freed the Cham,

Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam [3]
Of a monstrous brood of vampire bats:
And, as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? Fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
  Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
  In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser

2. The Tartars were a fierce nation in Central Asia — Cham was their ruler or Khan.
3. The title of a powerful prince in central India.

Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery[4]
Is breathed) called out, Oh rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery![5]
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,[6]
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,[7]
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face

4. An old stringed instrument.
5. A store of salt meats and pickles.
6. Midday meal.
7. A cask.

Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For Council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;[8]
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait: beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's[9] kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver.[10]

8. The names of some choice wines.
9. The chief prince of the Mohammedan peoples: he claimed to have inherited the authority of Mahomet.
10. A penny.

And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

Once more he stept into the street;
  And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
  And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
  Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,

As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
  And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
  His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left.
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,

And found myself outside the Hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
  There came into many a burgher's pate
  A text which says, that Heaven's Gate
  Opes to the Rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
  Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
  And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
  On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor [11]
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
  To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great Church window painted

11. A small drum.

[illegible]

And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania [12] there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned [13]
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers;
And, whether they pipe us free, from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

12. A princedom to the east of the kingdom of Hungary: now art of Roumania.
13. Trapped.

Matthew Arnold

(1822–88)

Matthew Arnold was the eldest son of the famous Dr. Arnold f Rugby, who did so much to make our public schools what hey are to-day. Matthew was educated at Rugby and Oxford, nd was a famous essayist and critic as well as a poet. He was lso among the early Inspectors of Schools, and so did much to ound our national education. He afterwards became Profes f Poetry at Oxford. His verse as a rule is quietly dignified little formal. His long poem, *Sohrab and Rustum*, based story from Persian history, is perhaps his best known work.

FROM SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

[Rustum, a Persian chieftain and warrior, lost his son Sohrab while he was a baby, and the boy finally became a chieftain in the Tartar armies and led them against Persia. On the banks of the River Oxus, in the north of Persia, Sohrab fought against his father, between the two armies, neither knowing who the other was.]

He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword: at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west: their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out: the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest

He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sunk to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker: thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert lion, who all day
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand:—
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
[illegible]
And in his hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head: his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, Rustum! Sohrab heard that shout,
[illegible]
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sunk to the ground.
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;
Saw Rustum standing safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

(1837–1909)

Swinburne was not a likeable man, being of weak and affectec character. Much of his verse is empty, but at his best his line roll out gloriously. The long poems *Atalanta in Calydon* anc *Tristram of Lyonesse* contain fine passages; and some of hi many shorter poems are full of both energy and beauty.

ENGLAND: AN ODE

Music made of change and conquest, glory born of evil slain
Stilled the discord, slew the darkness, bade the lights of tempes
 wane,
Where the deathless dawn of England rose in sign that righ
 should reign.

Where the footfall sounds of England, where the smile o
 England shines,
Rings the tread and laughs the face of freedom, fair as hop
 divines
Days to be, more brave than ours, and lit by lordlier stars fo
 signs.

All our past acclaims our future: Shakespeare's voice anc
 Nelson's hand,
Milton's faith and Wordsworth's trust in this our chosen anc
 chainless land,
Bear us witness: come the world against her, England yet shal
 stand.

Earth and sea bear England witness if he lied who said it; h
Whom the winds that ward her, waves that clasp, and her
 and flower and tree
Fed with English dews and sunbeams, hail as more than ma
 may be.

No man ever spake as he that bade our England be but true,
Keep but faith with England fast and firm, and none should bid her rue;
None may speak as he: but all may know the sign that Shakespeare knew.

Austin Dobson

(1840–1921)

Dobson is perhaps best known as an essayist—especially on matters of the eighteenth century. He also wrote some pleasant and elegant, though not deeply serious verse, of which the following is an example.

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

He lived in that past Georgian day,
When men were less inclined to say
That "Time is Gold", and overlay
With toil their pleasure;
He held some land, and dwelt thereon,—
Where, I forget,—the house is gone;
His Christian name, I think, was John,—
His surname, Leisure.

Reynolds[1] has painted him,—a face
Filled with a fine, old-fashioned grace,
Fresh-coloured, frank, with ne'er a trace
Of trouble shaded;
The eyes are blue, the hair is drest
In plainest way,—one hand is prest
Deep in a flapped canary vest,[2]
With buds brocaded.

1. The great portrait painter: first president of the Royal Academy.
2. Waistcoat.

He wears a brown old Brunswick coat,
With silver buttons,—round his throat,
A soft cravat;—in all you note
    An elder fashion,—
A strangeness, which, to us who shine
In shapely hats,—whose coats combine
All harmonies of hue and line,
    Inspires compassion.

He lived so long ago, you see!
Men were untravelled then, but we,
Like Ariel, post o'er land and sea
    With careless parting;
He found it quite enough for him
To smoke his pipe in "garden trim",
And watch, about the fish tank's brim,
    The swallows darting.

For him their drowsy wheelings meant
More than a Mall[5] of Beaux that bent,
Or Belles that bridled.

Not that, in truth, when life began
He shunned the flutter of the fan;
He too had maybe "pinked his man"
In Beauty's quarrel;
But now his "fervent youth" had flown
Where lost things go; and he was grown
As staid and slow-paced as his own
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held
That no composer's score excelled
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled
It's jovial riot;
But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—
His idly meditative days,—
His rustic diet.

The "Benefactions" still declare
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,
And "12 Pence Yearly to Prepare
A Christmas Posset".[7]

Lie softly, Leisure! Doubtless you,
With too serene a conscience drew
Your easy breath, and slumbered through
The gravest issue;
But we, to whom our age allows
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
Look down upon your narrow house,
Old friend, and miss you!

7. A hot spiced drink.

Robert Louis Stevenson

(1850–94)

Stevenson possessed great all-round ability as a writer, and, in himself, is one of the most charming and kindly figures in literature. He wrote some splendid adventure stories, of which you probably know *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, some beautiful essays, and a lot of kindly yet inspiring verse. He was always very delicate in health and died in Samoa, where he had been sent in the last hope that the climate would save his life.

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
"Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

Canon H. C. Beeching

(1859–1919)

PRAYERS

God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free,
To run, to ride, to swim:
Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him:
Take the thanks of a boy

Jesu, King and Lord,
  Whose are my foes to fight,
Gird me with Thy sword
  Swift and sharp and bright.
Thee would I serve if I might,—
  And conquer if I can,
From day-dawn till night:
  Take the strength of a man.

Spirit of Love and Truth,
  Breathing in grosser clay,
The light and flame of youth,
  Delight of men in the fray,
Wisdom in strength's decay;
  From pain, strife, wrong to be free
This best gift I pray,
  Take my spirit to Thee.

W. E. Henley

(1849–1903)

Henley was rather a rugged poet, who sometimes wrote what might be called "fighting verse", and sometimes tried to bring poetry into commonplace things. He was also well known as an essayist and critic, and his style and writings mark the end of the Victorian age and the change to more modern subjects and ideas.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
  Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
  For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
  I have not winced nor cried aloud:
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
  My head is bloody, but unbow'd.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
  Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
  Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
  How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:

Section V

THE MODERN PERIOD

One cannot really say where the "Modern Period"—in which we live—began. Perhaps in future ages professors will decide that it started in 1919—that is, after the Great War—and that everything written before that time should really be joined to what was written in Queen Victoria's day. You will find, however, that many poets, now living, write in the same style as did the Victorians. It is impossible, moreover, to pick on certain men and say decidedly that these men are greater, and more likely to be remembered for ever, than their fellows. There is such a vast number of writers in every sphere of literature: so many of them are still writing, or have only recently died; and we, also, are so close to them in time that we cannot form a real judgment of their worth beyond saying that they are good. We can say, for example, that Thomas Hardy was a great novelist and also a great poet; but so too was Meredith; and they are not alone in either department of letters. We can say that Kipling was a great master of the short story; so too was Conrad; and they, also, are only two among many. Let us, then, just look at a few prominent features of the literature of this time and be content with that.

Playwriting has at last revived; and, except that plays now are nearly always in prose rather than verse, there are probably more fine playwrights than there ever were at any one time. The craft of the novel has continued to produce fine work; and if, perhaps, it has no outstanding figure like Scott, or

Dickens, or Fielding, there are numbers of people producing first-class novels. Essayists, biographers, historians are many and good. In short, we are lucky to live, as far as English letters are concerned, in a great age and a productive age.

Poets, who are more our particular concern, are also very numerous. And here, again, time has hardly allowed us to sort out the excellent from the merely very good. One tendency in verse, perhaps, is worth noting. It is not often, now, that a really long poem of merit appears.

We have said that it is often impossible to mark a clear division between Victorians and modern poets because their styles are often very similar. But that does not mean that they always think in the same way. In particular, many poets of to-day think that poetry should be written in our language as it is spoken by the people of our own time; and their poetry, therefore, contains many words and ideas which the Victorians would not have considered correct. The work of some of these poets is very difficult to understand, so that we have not printed any of it here. But no matter what the manner in which poetry is being written, it is possible to say that there are many sources of inspiration which are common to all poets. Among these are the moods of war, the love of the poets for their native England, and a sympathy and sense of kinship with all living creatures. Latterly, however, poets have become disturbed because they find that the Great War seems still to have left mankind distressed and troubled; so that the prevailing note in modern poetry is *often one of despair*. This does not mean that modern poets are not enjoyable. Their short verses have the merit of being easily read; so, too, have most of the novels, stories, and essays that are written. You will find them in your school library, on the shelves of your friends, or in your own home. *Browse among them for yourselves* and find which you like, and on what subjects and in what style they are written.

Thomas Hardy

(1840–1928)

Hardy was originally trained as an architect; but his heart was in authorship and he soon became famous through a great series of novels and tales of which the scene is laid in Dorset and the neighbouring counties—a district he calls Wessex. He also wrote a stupendous three-volume drama in verse on Napoleonic times, called *The Dynasts.* His many poems are now becoming recognized at their true value.

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
  "Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
  By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
  They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
  To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
  In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
  "Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton [1] by yonder coomb [2]
  Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
  Hoping it might be so.

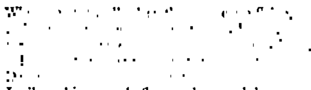
1. Farmyard. 2. Narrow valley with steep sides.

Robert Bridges

(1844–1930)

Bridges has died so recently that it is difficult for us, as yet, to see his poetry at its true worth. But it is already clear that this Poet Laureate not only did a great deal to advance the standard of modern poesy, but himself possessed great learning, depth of thought, and varied beauty of expression.

LONDON SNOW



Its clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
  And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;
  The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
  Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;
  Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look at the trees!"

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:
When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:
But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they
have broken.

John Davidson

(1857–1909)

A CINQUE[1] PORT

low the down the stranded town
What may betide forlornly waits,
With memories of smoky skies,
When Gallic navies crossed the straits;
When waves with fire and blood grew bright,
And cannon thundered through the night.

1. The Cinque Ports were in Kent: they were origin
Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, Sandwich. They had t
own Warden (or judge) and special privileges in return
supplying ships in time of war in mediæval days. Some (
that in the poet's mind) have ceased to be ports—for the
has receded and silt has choked their rivers and harbours.

With swinging stride the rhythmic tide
  Bore to the harbour barque and sloop;
Across the bar the ship of war,
  In castled stern and lanterned poop
Came up with conquests on her lee,
The stately mistress of the sea.

Where argosies [2] have wooed the breeze,
  The simple sheep are feeding now;
And near and far across the bar
  The ploughman whistles at the plough;
Where once the long waves washed the shore,
Larks from their lowly lodgings soar.

Below the down the stranded town
  Hears far away the rollers beat;
About the wall the seabirds call;
  The salt wind murmurs through the *street;*
Forlorn the sea's forsaken bride
Awaits the end that shall betide.

2. Wealthy merchantmen.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

(1859–1930)

Conan Doyle was a doctor who saw some military service, and has become world-famous for his adventurous historical stories, and as being the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He also wrote a few poems with a racy swing about them.

THE SONG OF THE BOW

What of the bow?
    The bow was made in England:
Of true wood, of yew-wood,
  The wood of English bows;

So men who are free
Love the old yew-tree
And the land where the yew-tree grows.

What of the cord?
The cord was made in England:
A rough cord, a tough cord,
A cord that bowmen love;
And so we will sing
Of the hempen string
And the land where the cord was wove.

What of the shaft?
The shaft was cut in England:
A long shaft, a strong shaft,
Barbed and trim and true;
So we'll drink all together
To the grey goose-feather
And the land where the grey goose flew.

What of the mark?
Ah, seek it not in England,
A bold mark, our old mark
Is waiting over-sea.
When the strings harp in chorus,
And the lion flag is o'er us,
It is there that our mark will be.

What of the men?
The men were bred in England:
The bowmen—the yeomen,
The lads of dale and fell.
Here's to you—and to you!
To the hearts that are true
And the land where the true hearts dwell.

Sir Henry Newbolt

(1862-)

VITAÏ LAMPADA[1]

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
  Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
  An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
  Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
  "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
  Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—
The Gatling's[2] jammed and the Colonel dead,
  And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
  And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
  "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that, year by year,
  While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
  And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
  Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
  "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

1. "The Torch of Life."
2. An early form of machine gun.

HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

"Ye have robb'd," said he, "ye have slaughter'd and
made an end,
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead:
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"
"Blood for our blood," they said.

He laugh'd: "If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day:
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive."
"You shall die at dawn," said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climb'd alone to the Eastward edge of the trees;
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows;
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur [1] hills,
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the gray little church across the park,
The mounds that hid the loved and honour'd dead;
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.[2]

1. The scene is on the North-west Frontier of India.
2. The reference is to the coloured inscriptions on brass memorial tablets.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
  The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between,
  His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timber'd roof,
  The long tables, and the faces merry and keen,
The College Eight [3] and their trainer dining aloof,
  The Dons on the daïs serene.

He watch'd the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
  He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;
He heard the passengers' voices talking of home,
  He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
  And strode to his ruin'd camp below the wood;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet,
  His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
  The blood-red snow-peaks chill'd to a dazzling whit
He turn'd, and saw the golden circle at last,
  Cut by the Eastern height.

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
  I have lived, I praise and adore thee." A sword swe
Over the pass the voices one by one
  Faded, and the hill slept.

3. The crew of the college boat. A "Don" is a tutor.

Rudyard Kipling

(1865–1936)

In his youth Kipling went out to India as a journalist, and his books on that country, and other parts of the British Empire, should be known to all boys. If you have not read these stories, you should do so; for few show as well as Kipling the high seriousness mixed with good humour which has inspired the hundreds of unknown men who have upheld their country's credit in their daily work all over the world. Kipling was a master of the short story, and he also wrote many verses which, if they are not often great poetry, are usually stirring in subject and have a fine swing about them.

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old—
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line—
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
  The captains and the kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away—
  On dune and headland sinks the fire-
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
[illegible] that have not Thee in awe—

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard [2]—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

1. Those outside the strict observance of the Faith among the ews.
2. Splinter, i.e. bomb or shell that has exploded.

W. H. Davies
(1870–)

THE KINGFISHER

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

Let every feather show its mark;
Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
  Thou hast no proud ambitious mind;
I also love a quiet place
  That's green, away from all mankind;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

Hilaire Belloc

(1870–   )

THE BIRDS

When Jesus Christ was four years old,
The angels brought Him toys of gold,
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play.
He made Him small fowl out of clay,
And blessed them till they flew away:
    Tu creasti, Domine.[1]

Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise.

1. It is Thou, O Lord, Who hast created.

Patrick R. Chalmers

(1872–   )

ROUNDABOUTS AND SWINGS

It was early last September nigh to Framlin'am-on-Sea,
An' 'twas Fair-day come to-morrow, an' the time was after
    tea,

An' I met a painted caravan a-down a dusty lane,
A Pharaoh [1] with his waggons comin' jolt an' creak an' strain;
A cheery cove an' sunburnt, bold o' eye and wrinkled up,
An' beside 'im on the splashboard sat a brindled tarrier pup,
An' a lurcher wise as Solomon an' lean as fiddle-strings
Was joggin' in the dust along 'is roundabouts and swings.

"Goo'-day," said 'e; "Goo'-day," said I; "an' 'ow d'you find things go,
An' what's the chance o' millions when you runs a travellin' show?"
"I find," said 'e, "things very much as 'ow I've always found,
For mostly they goes up and down or else goes round and round."
Said 'e, "The job's the very spit o' what it always were,
It's bread and bacon mostly when the dog don't catch a 'are;
[illegible]
[illegible]

"Goo' luck," said 'e; "Goo' luck," said I; "You've put it past a doubt;
An' keep that lurcher on the road, the gamekeepers is out."
'E thumped upon the footboard an' 'e lumbered on again
To meet a gold-dust sunset down the owl-light in the lane;
An' the moon she climbed the 'azels, while a night-jar seemed to spin
That Pharaoh's wisdom o'er again, 'is sooth [2] of lose-and-win;
For "up an' down an' round," said 'e, "goes all appointed things,
An' losses on the roundabouts means profits on the swings!"

1. A gipsy. 2. Truth.

Walter De la Mare

(1873–)

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with brier,
From their sand the conies [1] creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain;
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
" Rest, rest, and rest again."

1. Wild rabbits.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton
(1874–1936)

FOR THE GLASS STAINERS' GUILD

To every Man his Mystery,[1]
A trade and only one:
The masons make the hives of men,
The domes of grey or dun,
But we have wrought in rose and gold
The houses of the sun.

The shipwrights build the houses high
Whose green foundations sway
Alive with fish like little flames,
When the wind goes out to slay.
But we abide with painted sails
The cyclone of the day.

The weavers make the clothes of men
And coats for everyone;
They walk the streets like sunset clouds;
But we have woven and spun
In scarlet or in golden-green
The gay coats of the sun.

You whom the usurers and the lords
With insolent liveries[2] trod,
Deep in dark church behold, above
Their lance-lengths by a rod,
Where we have blazed the tabard[3]
Of the trumpeter of God.

1. Each skilled craft was so called in mediæval days.
2. Bands of retainers.
3. The crested embroidered coat of a herald.

John Masefield

(1878–)

SEA FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's [1] over.

1. Spell of duty at the helm.

Harold Monro

(1879–1932)

MILK FOR THE CAT

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate;
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

Alfred Noyes

(1880–)

THE RETURN OF DRAKE

[Drake was the first Englishman to sail round the world and, in the course of his great voyage, he had carried out the most daring raids upon the Spanish ports in the Pacific, and his ship, the little *Golden Hind*, was literally ballasted with treasure. Angry news of his deeds had already reached England from Spain, and his arrival at Plymouth was the occasion of great enthusiasm.]

And while the world awaited him, as men
Might wait an earthquake, quietly one grey morn,
One grey October morn of mist and rain
When all the window-panes in Plymouth dripped
With listless drizzle, and only through her streets
Rumbled the death-cart with its dreary bell
Monotonously plangent [1] (for the plague
Had lately like a vampire sucked the veins
Of Plymouth town), a little weed-clogged ship,
Grey as a ghost, glided into the Sound
And anchored, scarce a soul to see her come,
And not an eye to read the faded scroll
Around her battered prow—the *Golden Hynde*.

1. Sharply noisy.

Then, thro' the dumb grey misty listless port,
A rumour like the colours of the dawn
Streamed o'er the shining quays, up the wet streets,
In at the tavern doors, flashed from the panes
And turned them into diamonds, fired the pools
In every muddy lane with Spanish gold,
Flushed in a thousand faces, Drake is come!
Down every crowding alley the urchins leaped
Tossing their caps, the *Golden Hynde* is come!
Fisherman, citizen, prentice, dame and maid,
Fat justice, floury baker, bloated butcher,
Fishwife, minister and apothecary,
Yea, even the driver of the death-cart, leaving
His ghastly load, using his dreary bell
To merrier purpose, down the seething streets,
Panting, tumbling, jostling, helter-skelter
To the water-side, to the water-side they rushed,
And some knee-deep beyond it, all one wild
Welcome to Francis Drake!
Wild kerchiefs fluttering, thunderous hurrahs
Rolling from quay to quay, a thousand arms
Outstretched to that grey ghostly little ship
At whose masthead the British flag still flew;
Then, over all, in one tumultuous tide
Of pealing joy, the Plymouth bells outclashed
A nation's welcome home to Francis Drake.

James Elroy Flecker

(1884–1915)

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

[This poem is incorporated in Flecker's play, *Hassan*. The scene is at the Gate of the Moon at Bagdad, as the night caravan is leaving.]

The Merchants

Away, for we are ready to a man!
Our camels sniff the evening and are glad.
Lead on, O Master of the Caravan,
Lead on the Merchant-Princes of Bagdad.

The Chief Draper

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bows and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

The Chief Grocer

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,[1]
Mastic [1] and terebinth [1] and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's own Prophet eats in Paradise.

The Principal Jews

And we have manuscripts in peacock styles
By Ali of Damascus: we have swords
Engraved with storks and apes and crocodiles,
And heavy beaten necklaces for lords.

The Master of the Caravan

But you are nothing but a lot of Jews.

1. Aromatic ointment, gum, and turpentine.

Principal Jew
Sir, even dogs have daylight, and we pay.

Master of the Caravan
But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes,
You dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?

Ishak
We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow
Across that angry or that glimmering sea,

White on a throne or guarded in a cave
There lives a prophet who can understand
Why men were born: but surely we are brave,
Who take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

Hassan
Sweet to ride forth at evening from the wells,
When shadows pass gigantic on the sand,
And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

Master of the Caravan
Open the gate, O watchman of the night!

The Watchman
Ho, travellers, I open. For what land
Leave you the dim-moon city of delight?

Merchants (with a shout)
We take the Golden Road to Samarkand!

(The Caravan passes through the g

Sir E. K. Chambers

(1866–)

I LIKE TO THINK OF SHAKESPEARE

I like to think of Shakespeare, not as when
In our old London of the spacious time
He took all amorous hearts with honeyed rhyme;
Or flung his jest at Burbage [1] and at Ben; [2]
Or speared the flying follies with his pen;
Or, in deep hour, made Juliet's love sublime;
Or from Lear's kindness and Iago's crime
Caught tragic hint of heaven's dark way with men.

These were great memories, but he laid them down.
And when, with brow composed and friendly tread,
He sought the little streets of Stratford town,
That knew his dreams and soon must hold him dead,
I like to think how Shakespeare pruned his rose,
And ate his pippin in his orchard close.

1. A famous actor of Shakespeare's company.
2. Ben Jonson: A playwright of the time who gathered poets round him at the Mermaid Tavern.

Edmund Blunden

(1896–)

THE BARN

Rain-sunken roof, grown green and thin
For sparrows' nests and starlings' nests;
Dishevelled eaves; unwieldy doors,
Cracked rusty pump, and oaken floors,
And idly pencilled names and jests
Upon the posts within.

The light pales at the spider's lust,
The wind tangs through the shattered pane:
An empty hop-poke [1] spreads across
The gaping frame to mend the loss
And keeps out sun as well as rain,
Mildewed with clammy dust.

The smell of apples stored in hay
And homely cattle-cake is there.
Use and disuse have come to terms,
The walls are hollowed out by worms,
But men's feet keep the mid-floor bare
And free from worse decay.

All merry noise of hens astir
Or sparrows squabbling on the roof
Comes to the barn's broad open door;
You hear upon the stable floor
Old hungry Dapple strike his hoof,
And the blue fan-tail's whir.

The barn is old, and very old,
But not a place of spectral fear.
Cobwebs and dust and speckling sun
Come to old buildings every one.
Long since they made their dwelling here,
And here you may behold

Nothing but simple wane and change;
Your tread will wake no ghost, your voice
Will fall on silence undeterred.
No phantom wailing will be heard,
Only the farm's blithe cheerful noise;
The barn is old, not strange.

1. The bag into which hops are put as they are picked.

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V

An Elegy

To face the fortune of a scowling time,
The omen and the rumour, we acclaimed
This quiet man proceeding in his prime;
And his first triumph by foreboding maimed
Faded with little room for smile or sigh
When the great tempest plunged from that dæmonic sky.

Recalling this, who does not picture still
Silent battalions, those who first deployed
And met the lightning on the crest of the hill,—
Ironically went into the void?
Yet Irony, corporal of Valour, stood
Aside when two men's names arose, and called them good:

Kitchener dies not, his command endured:
His King, who heartened even that mighty heart,
Stands with his marshal, and his gaze secures
The dead battalions. These no more shall part.—
With men like those, those Leaders and those Led,
Who can descant of hate? Who call their influence dead?

And who may school a king? Might Machiavel [1]
From his steeled cunning now communicate
Precept or paradox that could do well
In the nerve centres of a modern state?
Better the sailor's plainness; better still
The honest man's conviction, selflessness, good will.

1. Machiavelli, 1469–1527. An Italian writer on Statecraft, whose book, *The Prince*, recommends a ruler to pursue a policy of unscrupulous cunning.